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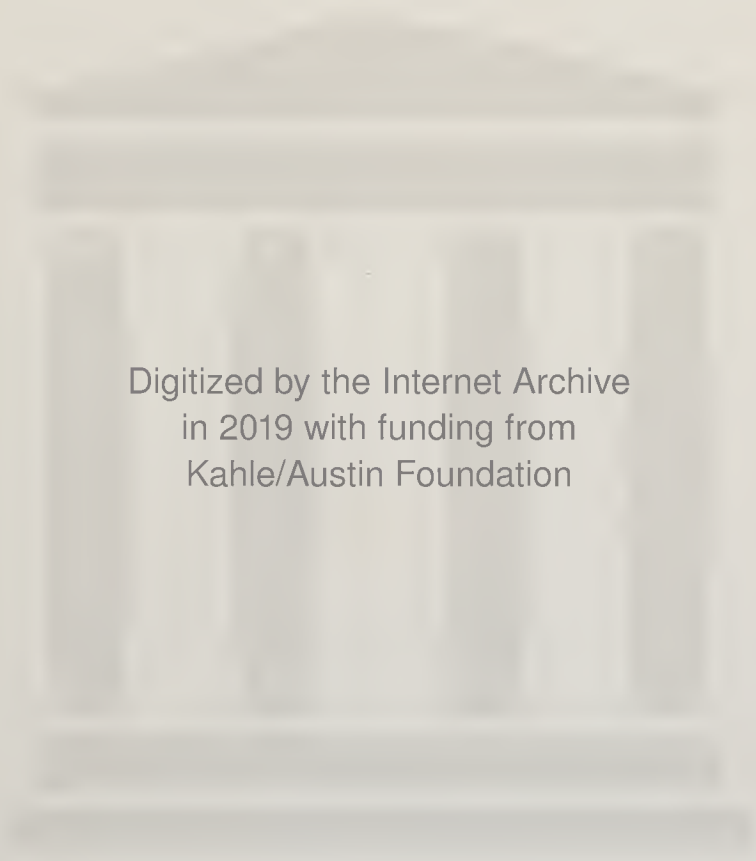
THE MAKERS OF CANADA SERIES

FOUNDED BY GEORGE N. MORANG

W. L. GRANT, M.A. (OXON.), LL.D., EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

VOL. XI
SIR WILFRID LAURIER
PART I





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SIR WILFRID LAURIER

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THE MAKERS OF CANADA SERIES

Anniversary Edition

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

BY

SIR JOHN WILLISON

*Illustrated under the direction of A. G. Doughty, C.M.G., Litt.D.
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AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE first twenty-seven chapters of this book were written in 1901 and published in December, 1903. Chapters XXVIII and XXIX were written in March and April, 1925, when the last chapter was also revised and much new material added. In the preparation of the volume as originally published the writer was greatly assisted by Mr. John S. MacLean, then correspondent of the *Toronto Globe* at Montreal, who spent many hours in examining the files of the French newspapers in the library of the Fraser Institute. He was also indebted to Mr. W. H. Dickson, then the *Globe's* resident correspondent at Ottawa, for similar useful and necessary work in the Library of Parliament. Through Mr. Avern Pardoe, Librarian of the Legislative Assembly at Toronto, and officials of the Toronto Public Library he was able to consult newspaper files, Blue Books and Parliamentary papers. The late John A. Ewan of the *Globe's* editorial staff and Dr. A. H. U. Colquhoun, former chief editor of the *Toronto Empire* and now Deputy Minister of Education for Ontario, gave the writer access to valuable books and pamphlets in their private libraries. Dr. Colquhoun also read in manuscript the book as published in 1903 as well as the three

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later chapters and prepared the index. There are few chapters in the book to which Dr. Colquhoun did not make some contribution and it is fully realized that many errors have been avoided because of his wide and accurate knowledge of the political history of Canada.

J. S. W.

Toronto, August, 1925.

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CHAPTER I

THE LIBERAL PARTY

WE may find the sources of the Liberal party of Canada in the eager enthusiasm and the heroic purpose of William Lyon Mackenzie; the fiery genius and fervent radicalism of Papineau; the saner counsels and more responsible statesmanship of Baldwin and Lafontaine; the reforming zeal and splendid optimism of George Brown; the intellectual dominance of Edward Blake; the constitutional prescience of Oliver Mowat; and the sympathetic and sagacious nationalism of Wilfrid Laurier. Holton and Dorion, if we except the issue of Confederation, were likewise consolidating and unifying forces in the creation of the Liberal party; and Alexander Mackenzie had a zeal for reform equal to that of Brown, and a prudence in days of stress and storm which the great journalist did not possess in equal measure. Many other men also have honourable fame in the Reform party, but these are the names that history will preserve.

No doubt the character of the Canadian party was also determined in some measure by the traditions and the tendencies of British Liberalism. But it is hard to fit an old world policy to new world conditions, and since the great battle for

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responsible government was fought out both in the British Islands and in the North American Provinces, it can hardly be said that the Liberals of Canada and of Great Britain have had a common programme. To-day, it may be, the policy of the Canadian Liberal party is more esteemed by Mr. Balfour and his colleagues than by the official chiefs of British Liberalism. It was not quite so during the great and luminous era of Gladstone. It would not be quite so if Lord Rosebery were restored to the leadership of the British Liberal party. Lord Rosebery peculiarly and pre-eminently typifies the newer imperial spirit of the Liberal party of Canada. In his utterances there is that sympathetic quality, and in his attitude that sense of identity with the common people which must always distinguish genuine Liberalism.

No one now disputes that William Lyon Mackenzie and the Reformers of 1837 fought to put down intolerable evils. The argument that constitutional agitation would surely have achieved the reforms that were finally conceded to tumult and revolt, has been advanced in mitigation of every abuse that has bred riot and rebellion among British freemen. It may be that Mackenzie was impetuous and turbulent, but the Rebellion of 1837 was at best a pitiful expression of the discontent which the greed and the oppression of the Family Compact had developed. Too much has been said of the rash counsels and unhappy adventures of Mackenzie, and

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too little of the crying grievances which an insolent and autocratic Executive would not redress, and of the privileges they were resolved to maintain. It is in such fashion that the decisive blow has been dealt to tyranny and privilege all down the splendid centuries of British history; and if in the story of Liberalism in all countries there are wild and sanguinary chapters, it is because only in that way could popular government be established and perpetuated.

The main achievements of Mackenzie and his associates were to subject the Executive to the control of Parliament and the people, to drive out of the Council the nominees of the Governor, and to impose substantial checks upon presumptuous imperial interference in the domestic affairs of the Canadas. In the green days of his strength, and through the hard season of conflict, Mackenzie bore himself bravely, steadily, and resolutely. Then came the rash advocacy of constitutional changes, which alienated public sympathy and discredited the cause of the reformers; heartbreaking days of exile; vagrant and abortive effort in visionary and impracticable causes; and, at last, return in shattered health to the land he had loved and served so well, but which in the meantime had outgrown the temper of revolt, and had not passed into the mood of gratitude.

But the work of reform was not to go back. The sceptre of leadership had passed into even stronger

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and more resolute hands. George Brown had come, and with George Brown the golden age of Liberalism in Canada. It was the fortune of this great figure in Canadian history to submit to exclusion from office throughout almost the whole of his strenuous and fruitful public career. Nor could it well be otherwise. George Brown was a reformer, an agitator, and a journalist. All history proves that office dulls the zeal for reform, and there is an inevitable conflict between the function of the journalist and the function of the minister. Fox was a reformer, and he hardly knew the taste of office. Cobden was a reformer, and he held no portfolio. Bright's official days were few and full of trouble. It was not the agitators for freedom in the United States who formed the cabinets at Washington. Seward, before the hour was ripe, proclaimed the "higher law than the Constitution," and Lincoln became President. Gladstone among British statesmen furnishes an exceptional example of political leadership, as eager and as daring under the yoke of office as under the easier conditions of opposition, and Cleveland in America was not quite silenced by the cares and exigencies of place-holding, place-making, and place-filling. But, in the main, the battle for reform has been waged by the unchained spirits who could not submit their necks to official harness, or were too restless, too strenuous, or too obnoxious to great social or great commercial interests to be admitted to cabinets.

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George Brown loved to deal sturdy blows. He loved to fight hand to hand and face to face. He had no heart for the defensive, and cared nothing for power except to achieve reforms, and nothing for place except as a point of advantage from which to strike down abuses and ameliorate unsatisfactory conditions. It would be probably too much to say that, like Cobden, he had never the desire for office. There is reason to believe that there were times when he felt strongly that it was essential to the complete success of the measures he had at heart that he should fashion the legislation and control the administration of affairs. He was hurt and angered by the shifty and double-faced methods adopted to strangle the Brown-Dorion Ministry at its birth, and, it may be, was persuaded that he should have had a controlling voice, if not the first place, in the Cabinet which organized Confederation. In the first case his anger was just, and in the second his expectations were not unreasonable. If not the chief architect, he was at least the chief missionary of Confederation.

Sir John Macdonald, on the other hand, was rather the political beneficiary of the labours of men who had made Confederation a dominant issue before he set resolute hands to the movement. He was sympathetic at heart, he was in touch with the British North American League which organized in 1849 to resist the annexationists, he gave nominal

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assent to the arguments of academic unionists, and the Cartier-Macdonald Government of 1858 feebly countenanced the project. But, like many another politician, he preferred to govern under established conditions rather than risk the loss of office by the premature adoption of a revolutionary policy, while in view of his Quebec alliances there was clear political gain in resisting the Brown school of federalists. Wary as always, adroit, surefooted and sagacious, he did not adopt the child until it was well grown, and he then bulked larger at its side than the men who had nursed it from infancy. Such had been the attitude and action of Peel on Catholic Emancipation, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and the part was not discreditable to him ; nor do we, in emphasizing the patient and judicious growth of Sir John Macdonald's attachment to the cause of Confederation, mean to deny his great services in the accomplishment of the union of the Canadian provinces. But when history deals with Catholic Emancipation it does not forget Canning, and Grey, and O'Connell ; nor has the mighty, unfaltering, irresistible campaign of Bright and Cobden against the evils and exactions of the old mercantile system been overshadowed by Peel's parliamentary services to Free Trade. So, when we estimate the forces which accomplished the union of the Canadian provinces, we do well to remember Macdonald, and Cartier, and Tupper, but we do far from well if we forget Brown, and Galt, and Howe, and

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Morris, and McGee, and Cauchon, and Johnson, and Uniacke.

If it be true, as Mr. Goldwin Smith has said, that Confederation was the child of political deadlock, then George Brown was responsible for the deadlock.¹ In that very fact we perhaps discover why the Liberal leader was not the first Prime Minister of Canada. In the prosecution of the work he found to do, he had fought long and hard, always with a sweeping arm and along a straight path, and so had antagonized influential elements of the population and bred enmities on every side. He was dreaded by the timid brood of compromisers in his own party, and hated by powerful political opponents whom he had hunted with unsparing vigour.

At least four great measures are inseparably associated with the name and fame of George Brown: (1) the abolition of the clergy reserves, (2) representation by population, (3) the federation of the Canadian provinces, and (4) the incorporation of the North-West Territories into the new commonwealth. In one of these propositions considerations of clerical privilege were directly involved, and racial and sectarian issues arose in the contest for representation by population, and in the movement for Confederation. The question of separate schools was also an abiding issue in many of the political contests which preceded Confederation, as it has appeared in contests in many of the provinces and

¹ "Canada and the Canadian Question," by Goldwin Smith, page 143.

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even in national elections since the union. George Brown had no toleration for privilege, social, racial, or clerical. He was a determined opponent of the separate school system, and had little consideration for the racial sensitiveness of Quebec. Hence he was often in open and deadly quarrel with the Roman Catholic hierarchy, a sleepless political force in all countries; and in the long struggle for representation by population, as a means of escape from the system under which the local affairs of Upper Canada were controlled by an administration maintained in office by the vote of Quebec, Mr. Brown said many things which the French province bitterly resented, and did not readily forget.¹ It seemed for long as though Mr. Brown had made the Catholic ecclesiastics and the French-speaking people the perpetual allies of the Conservative leaders, and it is certain that, to the end of his days, Sir John Macdonald

¹ In his address to the electors of the united counties of Kent and Lambton, in 1851, George Brown advocated total separation of Church and State as the foundation of the political structure of Reformers; diverting the clergy reserves to the support of national common schools, abolishing the rectories by Act of Parliament, and restoring the land to the people; national education; abolition of all money grants for sectarian purposes; placing all ecclesiastical corporations under one general act, and clergymen on an equal footing as to the celebration of matrimony; parliamentary representation by population; extension of the franchise; free commercial intercourse on a footing of reciprocity between Canada and the United States, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the West India Islands; development of internal water communications and throwing them open to all nations on the payment of moderate tolls; and a trunk line of railway through Upper Canada, westward from Quebec, with termini at Windsor and Port Sarnia.

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profited by the antagonisms which Mr. Brown had created among the Roman Catholic and French elements of the population.

To the people of Quebec there was a suspicion of indecent haste in the demand for representation by population. When Upper and Lower Canada were united in 1841, the population of Quebec was 661,000, while that of the English province was but 486,000. Quebec, however, submitted to equality of representation in the Parliament of United Canada, and thus made possible a union which could hardly have been effected if Upper Canada had been required to accept a position of inferiority in the common Legislature.¹ What was known as the double majority also came to be recognized as necessary to the preservation of good relations between the two provinces, and the harmonious and effective working of the machinery of government. The rule of the double majority required that a government should have the support of at least one-half of the representatives from both Upper

¹ In the Report on the Affairs of British North America, Lord Durham said: "With respect to every one of those plans which propose to make the English minority an electoral majority by means of new and strange modes of voting, or unfair divisions of the country, I shall only say, that if the Canadians are to be deprived of representative government, it would be better to do it in a straightforward way, than to attempt to establish a permanent system of government on the basis of what all mankind would regard as mere electoral frauds. It is not in North America that men can be cheated by an unreal semblance of representative government, or persuaded that they are out-voted, when, in fact, they are disfranchised."

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and Lower Canada, and must resign or appeal to the country in case of failure to command a majority in either province, no matter how overwhelming might be its support in the other province, nor how substantial its majority in a full Parliament. We can easily imagine how precarious was the tenure of administrations, and how difficult the work of government under such conditions, and how such a question as the organization of a separate school system for Upper Canada must rend the two communities apart and arouse passions and prejudices utterly destructive of the public peace, and wholly fatal to all good understanding between the French and English sections.

It was to end these mischievous conflicts and to secure the balance of power for Upper Canada, that Brown urged his demand for representation by population, and it was in order to checkmate the Liberal leader that John A. Macdonald and George E. Cartier abandoned the principle of the double majority, and undertook to govern in defiance of the dominant sentiment of the larger province and the votes of a decisive majority of its representatives. It was vain to argue that the device of the double majority was no part of the compact of union, and, in fact, was inoperative in practical government, as the Liberals finally discovered; and it was just as useless to insist that Quebec had accepted equality of representation while that province had the larger population, and therefore Upper Canada

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could not fairly stand out for concessions which the Lower Province under like circumstances had not exacted. Party feeling ran high, racial and sectarian passions were roused, the language of press and platform was bitter and intemperate, and the Queen's government could hardly be carried on. At last it became manifest to the leaders of public opinion, in both Upper and Lower Canada, that only by a federation of the Canadian provinces and more elastic constitutional machinery could the deadlock be broken, and stable conditions of government be re-established. George Brown had forced a situation from which there was no escape except by the adoption of his policy—the organization of a federal commonwealth and representation by population.

It was not Mr. Brown who first saw the vision of federation, and it may be that he contended for the principle of federalism rather than for the organization of a British confederacy in North America. But he probably saw that a federal union of Upper and Lower Canada would provide the only enduring basis upon which the wider confederation could be established; and while his first object was to destroy the grave abuses imbedded in the old system, and apply the federal principle to the two Canadas, still no other man contributed so mightily to the final result, even though at times his stormy advocacy seemed to make for disunion and disruption. In 1858 he wrote of Confederation as a desirable, but remote event. In

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1859 he persuaded a great Liberal convention held in Toronto to declare for the principle of federalism. In 1864 he presented to Parliament a report from a committee on constitutional changes in favour of the federative system for Upper and Lower Canada, or for the whole of British North America, if the wider union could be accomplished. This report was resisted by Mr. Macdonald, but it formed the basis of the negotiations for the coalition; and although Brown sought to make a federal union of Upper and Lower Canada the prime object of the coalition, he finally accepted from Galt and Macdonald the larger scheme of Confederation as an immediate policy, and sacrificed old and dearly cherished political alliances in order to carry the great project to success. He, more than any other man, exposed and established the impotency of the old legislative arrangement, and he, more than any other man, now stimulated expectations of larger national life, and happier national conditions from the projected union of the British American communities.

It is true that the demand for representation by population involved the violation of a constitutional compact. Nothing is clearer than that equal representation for each province was the vital feature of the union agreement between Upper and Lower Canada, and it is not surprising that Quebec, which accepted equality of representation when it had the larger population, should resent

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the attempt to change the very basis of the compact just as soon as the population of Upper Canada outgrew that of the sister province. The English-speaking community would not submit even temporarily to the rule of a Quebec majority, nor was it to be expected that Quebec would consent to grant the Upper Province an increase of representation, and accept a position of permanent inferiority in the united Parliament.

Mr. Brown was met by the appeal to good faith, and overborne by the argument from the constitutional standpoint. While it is now manifest that he offered the only practical solution for the difficulties which had developed, and which were bound to develop, from the changing conditions of the country and the delicate texture of many local issues, it is well to remember that in the scheme for the union of Upper and Lower Canada, as in the later and larger plan of Confederation, Quebec displayed an admirable temper, and accepted actual loss of political power and actual impairment of political prestige in order to promote the organization of a Canadian commonwealth. Those among us who regard Quebec as a province apart from its neighbours, a separate French community set down among British states, must admit that with every extension of the bounds of Confederation, with every new province added to the Dominion, Quebec has sustained proportionate loss of power and influence, has borne the loss with dignity, and has

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sprung always with patriotic ardour to the new tasks of larger empire.

The legislative union of 1841 could not endure. From the first the seeds of dissolution were in the terms of the compact. It was inevitable that as Upper Canada increased in population it would demand increased representation, as Quebec sooner or later would have demanded increased representation if that province had shown the greater growth of population. It was impossible, moreover, for a common Parliament to handle many of the local issues that were bound to arise in a country half French and half English, half Catholic and half Protestant, with each community very much of a compact body, occupying its own territory and separated by a central line of division. No constitutional compact can long survive a growth of adverse opinion. There was no future for united Canada except dissolution, or evolution into some such larger union as the leaders of the Confederation movement proposed. Mr. Brown forced this conclusion upon the country, and forever took his place among the great constructive statesmen of North America. The Liberal leader established the necessity for Confederation, the Conservative leader accepted the situation which his great opponent had created, and Brown and Macdonald joined hands to effect the union.¹

¹ In his letter of March 9th, 1871, to a committee acting on behalf of a meeting of prominent Catholics from all sections of Ontario, Mr.

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Mr. Brown had to make surrender and sacrifice in order to enter the Coalition Cabinet. We shall not find in our history any larger act of patriotism. It was, in fact, due mainly to very earnest and persistent pressure from Lord Monck that he at last agreed to countenance the coalition. It was easier for Macdonald to coalesce with Brown than for Brown to unite with Macdonald. The Conservative leader had an administrative record which Mr. Brown had opposed at well nigh every step and in almost every detail. He had declared with equal emphasis his want of confidence in the man and in his public policy, and if his words were to be taken at their face value, Mr. Macdonald should have been excluded from all cabinets, and from all share

Brown said: "Need I remind you how, year after year, the Reform party stuck to their great purpose; and how, at last, by a party sacrifice having few parallels in party history, they won for the people of Upper Canada—Protestant and Catholic alike—that great measure of justice embodied in the Act of 1867. Under that Act the people of Ontario enjoy representation according to population; they have entire control over their own local affairs; and the last remnant of the sectarian warfare—the Separate School question—was settled forever by a compromise that was accepted as final by all parties concerned. I deny not that in this protracted contest words were spoken and lines were penned that had been better clothed in more courteous guise. But when men go to war they are apt to take their gloves off; and assuredly if one side struck hard blows, the other was not slow in returning them. And looking back on the whole contest, and the ends it has already accomplished, I do think every dispassionate person must confess that had the battle been ten times fiercer than it was, and the words spoken ten times more bitter than they were, the triumphant success that has attended the long agitation would have sunk all the evils attending it into utter insignificance. We have obtained our just share in the administration of the affairs of the Dominion; we have

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in the government of the country. To unite with this man for the performance of a great act of constructive statesmanship was to recognize his commanding influence and to admit his fitness for participation in great events. We are not concerned to justify Mr. Brown's estimate of his brilliant and resourceful opponent. Those were days of hard and bitter controversy, and Mr. Brown gave at least as much justice as he received. There can be no doubt that he was resolutely opposed to Mr. Macdonald's political methods and to many features of his public policy, and that to a man of Mr. Brown's downright sincerity and profoundly earnest temperament, Mr. Macdonald's easy humour and rare arts of political management were thoroughly distasteful. Not the less so, perhaps, because

obtained exclusive control over our provincial affairs; we have banished sectarian discord from our legislative and executive chambers; and we enjoy a degree of material prosperity, and have a degree of consideration for the religious views and feelings of each other, that no living man ever witnessed in Canada till now. I claim that to accomplish these great ends was, all through our agitation, the avowed object for which we fought. I claim that the principles involved in our agitation were precisely those that the Catholics of Canada held and firmly contended for in the olden time when they worked cordially in the Liberal ranks. I repeat my conviction that, had it not been for the intrusion of French Canadian dictation in our affairs, the Reform party might have remained intact until this day. And I ask those of you who can do so, to carry your minds back to the position held by Catholics in times gone by, and say whether any other section of the people of Upper Canada has such good reason to rejoice in the banishment of sectarian issues from the political arena, and the perfect equality of all denominations now so firmly and so happily enjoyed, as have the Catholics of Ontario."

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the man and his methods were so tremendously successful. Mr. Brown must have known, too, that such political unions are seldom happy, are soon terminated, and generally bring loss to the more scrupulous partners in the compact. But at least the coalition brought Confederation to birth, and that was worth all of labour and of sacrifice that was entailed upon its members.

It was inevitable that Mr. Brown's ministerial association with Mr. Macdonald should be brief and unsatisfactory. He could not occupy a subordinate position to the Conservative leader. There can be hardly any doubt that such was his position in the Coalition Ministry. There is a tradition among Liberals that if Brown had chosen to lead a movement against Macdonald, he could have dethroned the Conservative chief. When his resignation was offered, advances to this end were made to the Liberal leader by a powerful group of his colleagues; and that Galt and Cartier were active leaders in this movement seems to be certain, despite the absence of documentary evidence.

Neither in political craft nor in the management of men was Brown the equal of Macdonald. The one was patient, shrewd, and insinuating; the other blunt, outspoken, and aggressive. The one was concerned to buttress his position, solidify his forces, and bring recruits to his camp by all the arts of a persuasive personality and a positive genius for party generalship. The other hardly looked for

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sources of strength outside of the measures he advocated, and the arguments he addressed to the country and to Parliament. It is true that Mr. Brown knew the value of party organization, and, if we do not mistake, could connive at arguments in a campaign that were not presented from the housetops, and found lodgment in the voter's pocket rather than in his intellect. It would be sheer cant to pretend that the electoral practices of the Liberal party, under Mr. Brown's leadership, were faultless, and that he was superior to all the methods of the practical politician. It is also true that he had a vigilant eye for rising talent in the ranks of his party. No man ever knew Ontario better than George Brown, not even Sir John Macdonald or Sir Oliver Mowat. He searched every corner of the province for candidates. He knew the tendencies, sympathies, and prejudices of every constituency. He knew who might win here, and who must fail there. He understood the enormous value of strong candidates, and knew how the best cause could be wrecked by bad work at the party conventions. Lacking the softer arts of persuasion, he literally drove men into the political field, and inspired the most prudent and indifferent with something of his abounding energy and something of his invincible optimism. But while he could move men in the mass, when he came to deal with men individually he seemed able to work only upon those who were in natural sympathy with his views of public

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policy. He had no consideration for shirkers and trimmers. He was hard upon mediocrity, and sometimes mercilessly, and perhaps needlessly, crushed men who aspired to positions for which they were unequal. He would have only loyal comrades. Treachery and ingratitude he counted as the chief of political offences, and he waged no fights so bitter and relentless as those he carried on against men who had used his favour and his strength to climb to high position, and then repudiated the debt they owed, withheld their sympathy and counsel, and consorted with his opponents. He had, in short, none of the arts which Sir John Macdonald so successfully employed to lure the wavering type of politician into his camp. When he struck at a weak or treacherous ally he struck to kill, and without calculation; while Sir John Macdonald could wait for the opportune moment, provide fortuitous provocations to slow suicide, and withhold the fatal blow, until the victim had so exhausted his strength and blundered away his opportunities that he became impotent for mischief and hardly worth the killing.

Nothing in all Sir John Macdonald's remarkable career quite equals his handling of Confederation. He evaded active identification with the movement until it became the dominant issue in the politics of the country. Thenceforward no one was more influential in directing the movement and in settling the terms of the act of union. He saw Mr. Brown

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withdraw from the Coalition Cabinet and resign the leadership of the Liberal party. He held Mr. Macdougall and Mr. Howland in the ministry, and thus seriously impaired the unity and effectiveness of the Liberal forces. He made John Sandfield Macdonald his political ally, and established what was practically a Conservative government in the Liberal Province of Ontario. He employed Sandfield Macdonald, an old Liberal and an anti-unionist, to persuade Howe to accept the terms of the union. He emerged from the intrigues, the bargainings, the compromises, the readjustments which the changing conditions of the time invited, and perhaps necessitated, the unquestioned leader of the Conservative party, and the dominating force in the new Confederation.

Mr. Brown, on the other hand, was maimed by his connection with the coalition. Not a few of his Liberal associates foresaw that he would be outmanœuvred by Sir John Macdonald. Mr. Mackenzie boded disaster to the Liberal party from Brown's partnership with the Conservative leader. Holton and Dorion in Quebec were at least conditionally hostile to the Confederation project. Besides, there has always been in the Liberal party a destructive element which looks with suspicion upon new ventures in government, and this element was always restless under the driving optimism and bold constructive statesmanship of George Brown.

For Mr. Brown was essentially an optimist, and

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essentially a constructive statesman. With pen and voice he was always planning and building, and he never sought to pull down except with the design of rearing a fairer structure on the ruins. Whether as champion of a great state university, as leader of the movement for Confederation, or as advocate of the acquisition of the West, he was always progressive, hopeful, courageous, and whole-hearted. On many questions he was in advance of public opinion, while he was a thorough journalist in his quick grasp of a situation and profound appreciation of the value of steady, resolute, and aggressive fighting. He never hesitated to risk political loss for a principle or a cause in which his mind and heart were enlisted. He was superior to all mere office-hunting alliances. He was never the mere agent of popular opinion. When dissension was rending and war ravaging the American Republic, the current of feeling, at least in Toronto, set strongly towards the South, and Southern emissaries were held very close to the social heart of the community. But Mr. Brown stood out for the North as boldly even as did Bright and Cobden in England, and we have no better specimens of his formidable logic and fine moral eloquence than the speeches he made in denunciation of the aims and ambitions of the slave-holding confederacy, and in illustration and vindication of the simple verities of humanity, and the elementary truths of human freedom. If the virtue of consistency has high value

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in a public career, then few indeed among British statesmen have maintained their course so surely and so steadily as George Brown. It is hardly too much to say that he was revered by the Scottish element of the population, and no public journal ever addressed its constituency with more authority than *The Globe* under Mr. Brown's management. He was a platform speaker of remarkable power, exhaustive in detail, logical and direct in method, with a spacious grasp of fact and incident, and with all that infectious enthusiasm which gives the spoken word its strange power over the hearts and minds of men. He had that bold and ready courage which beats the most turbulent audience into submission, and there is no record that he was ever driven from a platform or ever quite silenced by a hostile meeting during all that rough and tumultuous period in our politics which led up to the Confederation settlement.

During the last twelve or fourteen years of his life he held no office of leadership in the Liberal party. But to the end he was influential in determining Liberal policy and held intimate relationships with the official leaders of the party. He probably advised upon all important measures initiated by the Mackenzie Administration, and to the hour of his death was the loyal ally and counsellor of Oliver Mowat. It is understood that he was in complete sympathy with the resolve of Mr. Mackenzie and Sir Richard Cartwright, not to adopt a

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protectionist policy, but to increase the revenue tariff from $17\frac{1}{2}$ to 20 per cent., in order to meet the necessities of the treasury in a time of unexampled commercial depression. In fact this policy was foreshadowed in *The Globe* with the full knowledge and concurrence of Mr. Brown, and was reluctantly abandoned in consequence of the representations of the Liberal contingent from the Eastern Provinces that any increase of customs taxation would be fatal to Liberal candidates in the Maritime constituencies.¹ The suspicion that

¹ *The Globe* on February 7th, 1876, said: "No one proposes to abolish our custom houses, or to fall back upon direct taxation for all our national revenues. In these circumstances no one can object to our raising that revenue by duties on imported articles, and that very much at our discretion. No one could object to this, and no one will, Britain least of all. If, in order to raise this needed revenue, a tariff of twenty or even twenty-five per cent. were necessary, no one, we suppose, would object to its imposition, though they might regret its necessity. Upon this point there is no diversity of opinion, and no need, therefore, of either argument or discussion. . . . We have already practically seventeen and a half per cent. protection, which the freight and other charges on foreign goods materially increases. Some very naturally argue that any industry which cannot live and thrive under that amount of protection does not deserve to live. If, however, the fiscal exigencies of the country require more revenue, no one would seriously object to the rate being still further raised. The range, however, within which this can be done to any advantage is very limited. Scarcely any would go further than twenty-five; while thirty or thirty-five, we should fancy, even our most rabid protectionist would, in any case, think excessive. After all, then, the diversity of sentiment on this tariff business is excessively small. On the one hand, the greatest sticklers for free trade never have objected to a revenue tariff, and as little have they objected to its increase, if, after the most rigid economy has been practised, the credit of the country required it, while they have never fixed upon a maximum tariff

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there was ever any open quarrel or even any general lack of sympathy between Mr. Brown and Mr. Edward Blake does not seem to be well founded. Mr. Blake was not inferior to Mr. Brown in intellectual calibre, while they were quite dissimilar in temperament, and very likely to seek common ends by different methods. It is too much to expect that either of two such men could be quite the echo of the other, particularly when we remember that each had a resolute strain of independence, and each the temper of leadership. If we do not mistake, Mr. Brown was profoundly conscious of Mr. Blake's remarkable ability, and largely instrumental in persuading the great advocate to embark upon a public career. Mr. Brown and *The Globe* were just as loyal to the Blake Administration in Ontario as to the Mackenzie Government at Ottawa, and Mr. Brown's counsel was as sympathetically received and as solidly considered by the leader of the provincial Cabinet as by the chief of the federal Ministry.¹

for any supposable circumstances. On the other hand, their opponents are shy about even mentioning taxation at all for purely protectionist reasons, while even at the worst they would never venture on more than two or three per cent. higher than what those whom they are continually denouncing as free traders are very willing to acquiesce in, if the national obligations make it necessary." On February 15th, *The Globe* added : "No one in Canada, any more than in England, has any desire to prevent our revenue tariff from affording such incidental protection to manufacturers as it can be made to afford without injuring it for revenue purposes."

¹ In his letter of 1871, to the Roman Catholic Committee, George

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No one would suppose, however, that absolute identity of opinion often exists among a group of opposition leaders, or even among members of the same cabinet. There must be differences of view, discussion, surrender, and compromise. There need not be disloyalty or intrigue. The collective wisdom must determine the final policy, and to secure the triumph of that policy the zeal and the energy of all must be applied. This is a necessary condition of the party system, certainly a necessary condition of the cabinet system. It is well that the secrets of council are not often unveiled, and that historical inquiry should not degenerate into mere curiosity. Of course neither a leader of opposition nor a cabinet minister is bound to accept a policy which his judgment and his conscience condemn. His only legitimate alternative, however, is open repudiation of the policy and frank appeal to the judgment and conscience of the country. This was Mr. Brown's course on more than one occasion, and here is the best evidence that he had no reverence for party except as an instrument of reform, and that he ranked progressive measures far above stagnant office-holding.

Brown said : "At the convention of 1867, I voluntarily resigned the leadership of that (Liberal) party, and have not since then taken any action in that capacity. Mr. Alexander Mackenzie is now leader of the Liberal party from Ontario in the House of Commons, and Mr. Edward Blake is leader in the Ontario Assembly ; they have my most cordial confidence and support, and to them I refer you for an official answer to your questions."

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But while Mr. Brown was sometimes a restless and uncomfortable political yoke-fellow, he never stooped to treachery or intrigue, and he was resolutely faithful to accepted co-workers in the great movements in which he was concerned. The passion of jealousy he never knew. He cared not how high men towered at his side, so long as they did not betray the reforms that were dear to him, in order to make more profitable alliances and step obliquely into office and emoluments. He was, in short, a simple, candid, loyal comrade, a bold reformer, an eager and even tempestuous agitator, a statesman in scope and vision, an unwavering champion of British connection and British institutions, and in his life and achievements are set deep the roots of Canadian Liberalism. In undertaking a study of the work and character of the present leader of the Liberal party, it has seemed necessary to make this historical survey in order that we may better understand the traditions to which he must appeal, the prejudices he must respect or overcome, the forces he must unite, the elements he must conciliate, if he is to establish and maintain the Liberal party as a ruling party and give the country orderly, stable, and progressive government.

CHAPTER II

THE STUDENT AND THE INSTITUTE

ALL down the generations the green and quiet country has been the nursery of poets, philosophers, and statesmen. It is there that men have room to grow and time to think. There is comfort and serenity in the open sky, the wide field, and the strip of bush, and a spacious leisure in the long, slow days, and solemn brooding nights. All there is of divinity in man ripens under such conditions, and the elemental simplicities and austerities of life breed in him high resolves and large ambitions. If we examine the rolls of the great public schools and universities, we shall find that very many of the leaders in the class-lists have come up from rural homes, and were reared perhaps in grievous circumstances. So we shall find it in the professions, in the churches, in the parliaments, in great commercial and financial enterprises. The roar and clamour of cities seem to produce diffusion and distraction. Social duties and social ambitions take the best out of lives that under the steadier conditions which prevail in rural communities, would have been deeper and fuller and richer in human service. How much of the strength and sanity of British statesmanship is the product of quiet English fields

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and wide ancestral estates! For generations the spirit of rural New England was the moral force of the American Republic. The rugged hills and bleak moors of Scotland are the nursing mothers of immortals. Lincoln's wide vision and infinite patience and high fortitude were caught, perhaps, from the spreading prairies and enduring hills of the West. We may not say that it is the fashion of the gods to rear their great ones in the silences of the plains and hills. But there is at least a half-truth in the thought that greatness feeds on isolation, and there is something in the near presence of infinite nature which begets enduring purpose and indomitable ambitions.

It was the fortune of Wilfrid Laurier to be born in a rural home, set in a quiet land, and if we would know the man we must remember his early surroundings, and recall his later years of serene companionship with nature and with books. He was born on November 20th, 1841, at St. Lin, in the County of L'Assomption. His father was a land surveyor, and his grandfather a farmer, with a strong inclination for the study of mathematics and technical science. His mother was Marcelle Martineau, of L'Assomption, who died when he was four years old. She was a woman of rare gifts, with a taste for art and a natural talent for drawing and designing. His father afterwards married Odeline Ethier, who had been nurse in the family. She had not the gifts of Mr. Laurier's mother, but was

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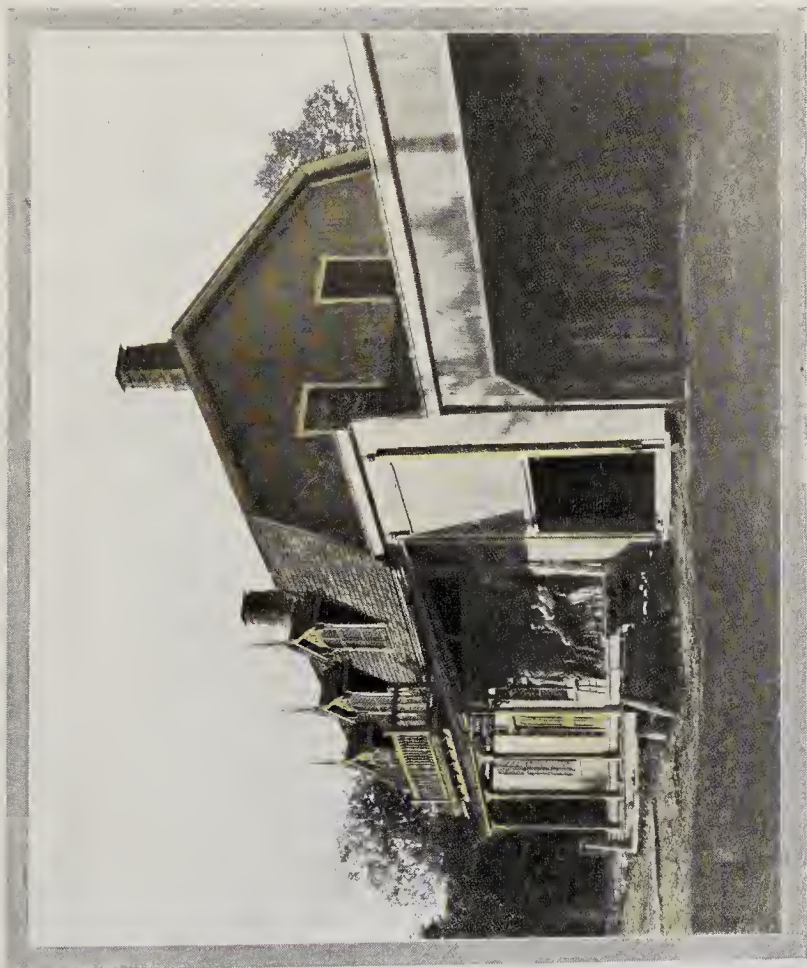
a kind, helpful, simple-hearted woman, and was greatly beloved by Wilfrid and his sister, who died in her early girlhood. Three sons were born of his father's second marriage. One became a physician, and died in 1898. Two survive: Charlemagne, a merchant at St. Lin, and member of the Commons for the county, and Henri, who is prothonotary at Arthabaskaville. His father died twenty years ago, and left practically nothing for the family. Land surveying was not a remunerative profession, nor was his father of a saving disposition. Still, he maintained his eldest son for seven years at L'Assomption College, as well as during his law course at Montreal.

In so far as Mr. Laurier represents inherited qualities, we may look for scientific and mathematical susceptibilities from the father, and for grace and art from the mother. Both parents had the gracious manner and wholesome simplicity of character which so beautifully distinguish the best stock of the rural parishes of Quebec. The marks of a happy childhood, the look that is caught at a mother's knee, never quite pass from the human face, and the face of Mr. Laurier in his softer moods suggests that the home in which he was reared was a centre of all the domestic affections, and of all the sweet courtesies of sympathetic family intercourse. He still makes an annual pilgrimage to the old home at St. Lin, and cherishes an unfailing affection for the aged stepmother. He has not

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allowed the increasing duties and responsibilities of public life to lessen his concern for her welfare, and has never neglected the frequent visits in which she delights, and which are among his chief pleasures. He has likewise manifested an abiding interest in the fortunes of his half-brothers, and altogether has shown an admirable sense of the obligations, and a keen appreciation of the intimacies of family relationship.

He first attended the elementary school of his native parish, and then from September, 1853, to June, 1854, was a pupil of the Protestant elementary school at New Glasgow. This village is eighteen miles distant from St. Lin, and his chief object in attending the Protestant school there was to learn the rudiments of English. He boarded with an Irish Catholic family named Kirk, and often visited that of Mr. John Murray, a great friend of his father, who kept a general store in the village. In his leisure hours he served behind the counter of Murray's store, not for any salary, but simply to improve his English by conversing with the customers. Mr. Murray was a strict Scotch Presbyterian, an elder in the church, and had been educated for the Presbyterian ministry. He and his family seem to have been greatly attracted by the schoolboy, who was made a welcome visitor in the household. Mr. Laurier still cherishes memories of his school life at New Glasgow, and in his reminiscent moods seems to dwell almost fondly upon



STORE IN NEW GLASGOW, QUEBEC, WHERE LAURIER WORKED

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the various physical encounters he had with the Scotch boys of the village. The fact that Laurier's father thus sent the boy from home to learn English would suggest that he saw in the son early promise of his brilliant qualities, and had sagaciously and correctly estimated the value of English, even as a mere commercial asset. There seems reason to think that the boy's experiences at New Glasgow had a distinct and lasting effect upon his character and opinions. Many years afterwards he was asked how it came that he was so tolerant of the religious beliefs of Protestants. In reply, he told the story of his relations with the family of John Murray, and added, "The pure family life and the godly conduct of the Murrays so impressed me that I am convinced a Protestant can be an earnest, true Christian, as well as a Catholic."

In September, 1854, at twelve years of age, he entered L'Assomption College, and for the next seven years was in the hands of its professors. The curriculum embraced a very complete course in Latin, less Greek, and still less English; a complete course in French literature; history, geography, mathematics, and mental philosophy.

The young Laurier seems from the first to have excited the special interest of his school-fellows; and if we may judge by later utterances, more than one of his classmates saw unmistakable promise of what the future would reveal, in the easy self-discipline, the serious purpose, and the mature

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gravity, which distinguished the youthful student. Mr. Arthur Dansereau, one of the most accomplished of Quebec journalists, and a political opponent of Mr. Laurier, wrote some years ago, "the very appearance of Wilfrid Laurier indicated his future, and for all those who knew him his success has never been a surprise." The political atmosphere of L'Assomption College, as of most Catholic schools in Quebec at that day, was Conservative, but Mr. Dansereau declares that "Wilfrid Laurier at sixteen exercised a veritable domination within the walls of this institution, which, however, did not share his political ideas." He concedes that the great majority of the professors and students were pronounced and even aggressive Conservatives, but adds that in spite of this violent current which arose in a classical college as in the real arena of militant politics, Wilfrid Laurier always held the first rank in debate and controversy. We are told that "his words, sincere, clear and eloquent, imposed respect and commanded respect, even in the most passionate." He was, too, "the most popular pupil, the pupil with the greatest following and the most influence." His ascendancy, however, was purely the ascendancy of character and of intellect. It seems that he rarely took part in the college games, and neither then nor later was he attracted by field sports or athletic contests. When it is remembered, however, that he was by no means robust, and that in fact up to middle life his health

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was a constant source of concern to his family and his friends, we can understand why he was more conspicuous in the school-room than on the playground. In the words of his fellow-pupil, from whom we have been quoting, "He was then, as to-day, calm, dignified, reserved, almost timid. But happy were they who formed the circle around him to know the charm of his words so musical, vibrant, grasping, his conversation always lofty, instructive and penetrating."

Wilfrid Laurier's feet turned in early youth towards the law courts and the hustings. We have it on the authority of Mr. L. O. David that the student was punished more than once for going without permission to hear cases argued in the village courthouse, or to listen to the orators at some political meeting.¹ But it was seldom, indeed, that he needed to be disciplined. He was a first-rate student, and he had something of that love for the classics which distinguishes the scholar rather than the man of affairs. We can easily imagine that if literature in Canada yielded daily bread, Wilfrid Laurier would have been quite as likely to seek a career in literature as in law and politics. But it was the fashion, and is perhaps still the fashion, for the young men of his stamp in Quebec to go into law, and through law into politics; and it is not improbable that Mr. Laurier deliberately adopted law as the more remunerative pursuit, and

¹ "Mes Contemporains," by L. O. David, p. 84.

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deliberately intended that the practice of law should lead on to a public career.

In 1861 Mr. Laurier entered the law office of Mr. Rodolphe Laflamme at Montreal. Mr. Laflamme was an advocate of large practice and wide reputation, and a politician of commanding influence in the Montreal district. Perhaps no better opportunity will occur for saying that fourteen years later the young student was his colleague in the Mackenzie Cabinet. Mr. Laurier took the law course at McGill University, and he had so profited from his residence with the Murray family, his term at the English school, and his persistent study of English literature, that he was able to take lectures in both French and English. He was an earnest and laborious student, and throughout the three-year course maintained a good place in the examinations. In his first year, 1861-62, he ranked second in general proficiency and stood well in the respective classes. In the class on Real Estate and Customary Law he was first, and in that on Obligations and General Principles of the Law of Contract, of which Mr. J. J. C. Abbott was professor, he ranked second. In the second year, 1862-63, he did not rank in general proficiency, but in the classes he was second in Bibliography of English and French and Canadian Law, and third in Real Estate and Customary Law. In his third and last year, 1863-64, for the degree of B.C.L., he was first in one class and second in two, and for gen-

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eral proficiency was equal with Mr. Henri L. Désaulniers, who stood second. His standing in the respective classes was second in Criminal and Constitutional Law, and first in Customary Law and Law of Real Estate. There were eleven students in the graduating class, and Mr. Laurier stood second. Nothing more is required to establish his standing than the fact that in the first and third years he was second on the aggregate. At graduation he was not only second in general proficiency, but was first in the thesis which had to be written for the degree. He thus became valedictorian, and was required to deliver the address for his class at the convocation of 1864. This was the first speech he ever delivered outside of a college debating club, and in its essential teaching it expresses the spirit and purpose which have animated all his political career.

He argued in this address that the mission of the man of law was to cause justice to reign; to separate the true from the false; to maintain the rights of citizens; to preserve the general peace; to preserve for families the inheritance of their ancestors, for the individual his honour when assailed, and for the public the just repression of offences; to hold within limits the audacity of the powerful, and to relieve the wretchedness of the weak, without violence for the one, and without indulgence to the other; to render to each according to his works. "I know of nothing greater; I

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admire the man who on the field of battle knows how to die and save his country; I admire the man who brings all generations under the spell of the creations of his genius; I admire the man who consecrates his whole life to the amelioration of humanity; but I admire him still more who has taken for the end of his life, his studies, and his labours, to render to each according to his works. All glories, all merits pale before these simple and great thoughts: to render to each according to his works, to cause justice to reign." He glanced at the severe training necessary for a profession which, he declared, was more than a mere bread-winner, more than an art, and more than a science, because of the moral obligations it involved. In a free country the places of first importance fall to the men of law. He gave as examples Eldon and Erskine in England; Favre, Ollivier, Billault and Rouher in France. Brougham, he said, began at the foot of the social ladder and ended on the benches of the House of Lords. This could not well be otherwise under the régime of Liberty. "Liberty is not the power to say everything and do everything: Liberty is the right to act and move at ease and without hindrance within the circle of the constitution traced by the people, without which that circle might be enlarged or contracted at will by a despotic hand." He contended that the prerogatives and the duties of the people and of the Executive ought to be maintained within the limits of the

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Constitution, and the man of law, by the mere fact of his studies, finds himself best placed to meet the necessities of this situation, provided that he acts within the Executive and invokes the rights of authority, and provided that his voice proceeds from the breast of the people, to maintain their prerogatives, or to moderate the encroachments of the powerful. In passing into the domain of politics, the man of law does not change his mission; there, still, he will have to render to each according to his works, and to cause justice to reign. He only widens the sphere of his activity. The tribunal to which he will address himself henceforth will be public opinion. The theme which he will develop will be the rights or the duties of a whole nation, and for audience he will have all the echoes of publicity.

This, as an eminent publicist had said, was an age in which each must bring his stone to the social edifice. Canada in the nineteenth century, when most societies were already old, could scarcely count a few centuries of existence. While in the old world only the reformer had an occupation, here all was new, and everything was still to build. We had the experience of the centuries to guide us. "The law is called upon to play another rôle in this country, an immense rôle, and one which belongs to it nowhere else. Two races share to-day the soil of Canada. I can say it here, for the time is no longer, the French and the English races have

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not always been friends ; but I hasten to say it, and I say it to our glory, that race hatreds are finished on our Canadian soil. There is no longer any family here but the human family. It matters not the language the people speak, or the altars at which they kneel. We are coming every day upon happy results of this holy work, and at this celebration we have had still another proof of it. You have heard French and English names here, graven on the tables of honour. You have heard some address the word to you in English, and I who am now speaking, I am speaking to you in my mother tongue, I am speaking to you in French. There is in this fraternity a glory of which Canada cannot be proud enough, for many powerful nations might come here to seek a lesson in justice and humanity. To whom do we owe this happy state of affairs ? There may be more than one cause for it, but the principal cause is the study of law. Two different systems of law rule this country: the French and the English. Each of these systems places under obligation not only the race to which it properly belongs, but each rules simultaneously the two races, and—a fact worth remarking—this introduction into the same country of two systems of legislation, entirely different, was carried out without violence, without usurpation, but solely as an effect of the laws of justice. It was natural that in passing under British domination the inhabitants of this country should continue to be ruled by their

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ancient laws in all the ordinary transactions of life, but it was equally just that the new government should repress after its own laws offences against the public order." Mr. Laurier attributed to this mingling of legal systems the first great influence making for the reconciliation of the races. The work thus begun was continued by the same just provisions which allowed to each people the law that was suited to its traditions and ideas. It was noteworthy that the union of the races had not proceeded so far in any class of Canadian society as among the men of law. "The mission of the man of law in Canada," said Mr. Laurier, "embraces, in summing up, the following: justice, the most noble of all human perfections; patriotism, the noblest of all social virtues; the union between the peoples, the secret of the future. Now we see the end; upon ourselves depends what our efforts shall be in mounting to the height of it."

Among Mr. Laurier's contemporaries in the faculty of law at McGill were Mr. J. J. Curran, of the class of 1862, who became Solicitor-General in the Ministry of Sir John Thompson, and Sir Melbourne Tait, with whom Mr. Curran now sits on the Superior Court Bench of Quebec; the Hon. George W. Stephens, and Mr. Justice C. P. Davidson, of 1863; Mr. L. H. Davidson, K.C., of 1864; and Mr. Arthur Dansereau, of 1865, his fellow pupil at L'Assomption College, and the staunch

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friend and ally of the brilliant Chapleau, in whom Mr. Laurier was to find the most formidable rival he has ever encountered in the French province.

Shortly after Mr. Laurier began the study of law at Montreal, he joined the *Institut Canadien*, and thereby struck his first blow for civil liberty, and registered his first protest against ecclesiastical domination in the realm of the intellect and in the field of public affairs. The *Institut Canadien* was a literary and scientific society, with a reading-room and library, and was founded in 1844 by a group of young, progressive, and independent thinkers, eager for personal distinction and ambitious to do useful and honourable work for the community. They adopted as their motto, "*altiustendimus*," and selected for their coat of arms the figure of a beehive with the words beneath, "*Travail et Concorde*." Incorporation was obtained in 1852, and the act states that the object of the *Institut* is to extend and develop a taste for science, art, and literature. Among the incorporators were A. A. Dorion, Joseph Doutre, Rodolphe Laflamme, Eric Dorion, and other names of outstanding distinction in the annals of Quebec. The *Institut* became the literary and political work-room of many brilliant spirits, and the source of influences which penetrated deeply into the social and political life of the country. It is told that at a meeting of the *Institut* in 1854, addresses of congratulation were presented to fourteen of the members upon their election to seats in Parliament.

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When the association was founded in 1844, there was no French reading-room or library in the whole Province of Quebec. But the organization of the *Institut* at Montreal furnished the nucleus of a popular and wide-spread movement, and ten years later there were more than one hundred such *Instituts* in the province, and of these, sixty-two were incorporated. They received a small annual grant from Parliament, and were held in great favour by the masses of the people. By the clergy, however, they were regarded with grave and increasing distrust, and soon indirect measures were taken to accomplish their destruction, or at least to alter their character and limit their activities.

It was first sought to secure the adoption of a rule by the St. Jean Baptiste Society, under whose auspices many of the *Instituts* were conducted, that only French-Canadians, or those married to French-Canadian women, could become members. Mr. Francis Cassidy, although of Irish birth, belonged both to the St. Jean Baptiste Society, and to the Montreal *Institut*, and when it was desired to make him President of the *Institut*, the constitution was amended so as to open the doors to all nationalities. This angered the clergy, and they organized a general attack upon the *Instituts* throughout the province. They opened many rival institutions under clerical control, which they named *Instituts Nationaux*. Hostile witnesses declare that some of these societies existed only on paper,

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but that they succeeded, nevertheless, in obtaining grants from Parliament. Spiritual terrors were also employed, the character of the libraries attacked, and loyalty to the *Instituts* became hardly distinguishable from denial of the Catholic faith, and open contempt for the religious authorities. This was an intolerable situation for many Catholics who had sought in the *Instituts* only congenial companionship, access to good reading, and intellectual culture, and they yielded dutiful obedience to the clerical demand. By 1858 all the original *Instituts* outside of Montreal had closed their doors, or had passed under clerical control.

The Montreal *Institut*, however, offered a prudent but determined resistance to the ecclesiastical authorities. Its members were reluctant to make the quarrel, and equally reluctant to surrender their right of private judgment and abandon the institution which they had reared with such high purpose and such genuine enthusiasm. In 1857 the society had seven hundred members, and had secured commodious premises for its meetings and library. The clergy proceeded to establish rival institutions, and opened the *Cabinet de Lecture* and *Cercle Littéraire* under the auspices of the Sulpicians, and the *Union Catholique* under the auspices of the Jesuits. Each of these societies had libraries and reading rooms, and was maintained at very small cost to the members. It was next attempted to persuade the *Institut* to exclude from membership all who did

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not profess the Catholic religion, and also to shut out of the reading room the Montreal *Witness* and *Semeur Canadien*, two Protestant papers that were uniformly unfriendly to the extremer pretensions of the Catholic clergy. These two propositions were the subject of heated and protracted debate, but both were rejected as inconsistent with the spirit of the *Institut*, and wholly foreign to the aims and purposes of its founders. It was then represented that the library contained books of an immoral character, and a petition was circulated declaratory of the truth of this statement, and pledging the signers to withdraw from membership. As a result of this movement one hundred and fifty members withdrew in a body and organized the *Institut Canadien Français*. The new society was countenanced by the clergy and aided by clerical subsidies, but it was established by laymen and was not under direct clerical control. Its main purpose was to receive all such members of the *Institut Canadien* as could be induced to follow the example of the one hundred and fifty who withdrew in consequence of the clerical condemnation of some of its books and periodicals.

The long, resolute, and inflexible attack upon the *Institut* was led by Bishop Bourget. This resourceful and aggressive ecclesiastic, whom we shall meet again in these pages, was born in 1799, and was a native of the parish of Pointe Levis. In 1821 he went to Montreal as secretary to Bishop

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Lartigue. In 1837 he was made Bishop of Tennesse, and coadjutor of Bishop Lartigue, and on the death of this Bishop in 1840, he became his successor in the episcopal see of Montreal. He was distinguished for piety, for courage, for inflexibility of purpose, for zealous exaltation of the ecclesiastical order, for bold assertion of the extreme pretensions of the Church to supremacy in civil affairs. He established the order of the Jesuits at Montreal, he founded a score of other religious communities and many charitable and educational institutions, and attempted to establish a Jesuit university at Montreal as a rival to Laval at Quebec. He was intolerant of free speech and free action in public affairs, and was one of the chief authors of the *Programme Catholique*, which required all Parliamentary candidates in Quebec constituencies to conform to the teachings of the Church, and to give full and entire adhesion to Roman Catholic doctrines in religion, in politics, and in social economy.

The quarrel between the Bishop and the *Institut* arose over the contention that the library contained immoral books. This, at least was the point selected for attack, but that the sources of the quarrel lay deeper, can hardly be doubted. The Bishop was irreconcilably opposed to free speech and free inquiry in the domain of politics, science, and religion, intolerant of the growth of all influences, and hostile to the existence of all moral or intel-

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lectual agencies that were not directly created and controlled by the ecclesiastics. Hence, if fault could not have been found with the books of the *Institut*, some other plan for its destruction would have been elaborated. In 1858, some members of the society, acting by inspiration of the clergy, asked for the appointment of a committee to make a list of such books as should be excluded from the library. The majority of the members, however, refused to sanction the proposition, and held that the *Institut* contained no improper books, and that it was the sole judge of the morality of such works as the library contained. "The *Institut*," they said, "has always been, and is alone competent to judge of the morality of its library, the administration of which it is capable of conducting without the intervention of foreign influences." This defiant action was greatly resented by the Bishop, and shortly afterwards he issued a pastoral letter in which the course of the *Institut* was considered and condemned. He pointed out that its members had fallen into two great errors, first in holding that they were the proper judges of the morality of their books, as that office belonged only to the Bishop, and secondly in declaring that the library contained no immoral books, although some of the works upon its shelves were in the Index at Rome. He cited a decision of the Council of Trent that any one who read or kept heretical books became subject to excommunication, and that any one who

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read or kept books forbidden upon other grounds was open to censure and punishment. He appealed to the *Institut* to recognize the authority of the Church, and to expunge the resolution declaring its competency to pass upon the character of the books supplied to its patrons. Otherwise no Catholic could be permitted to continue in membership.

Thus the quarrel grew, and it broadened and deepened for years to the ever increasing injury of the *Institut*, and to the grave loss and embarrassment of many of its most influential supporters. Such were the relations between the Bishop and the society when Mr. Laurier, a young Catholic student, on the threshold of his career, came to Montreal, and cast in his lot with the resolute few who were determined to adhere to its fortunes and maintain the right of independent thinking and the prerogatives of intellectual freedom in the face of clerical displeasure.

Mr. Laurier had also an active connection with an association of law students called the *Institut des Lois. Le Pays*, then the organ of Quebec Radicalism, in its issue of October 27th, 1863, announces a meeting at which Gonzalve Doutre would deliver an address on the subject, "Does religious profession in Canada entail civil death?" The notice is signed "W. Laurier, President."¹ Mr. Laurier him-

¹ *Le Pays* was twice condemned by Bishop Bourget, and finally destroyed.

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self, during this year, delivered an address before the *Institut des Lois* on an equally delicate and disturbing question: "Does the farmer or the proprietor pay the tithe?" Many of the papers read before the association were, of course, on general legal, literary, and political topics, and there seems to have been no deliberate purpose to raise issues that were distasteful to the religious authorities.

On December 3rd, 1863, Gonzalve Doutre delivered a lecture before the *Institut Canadien* on the subject, "Is the present system of education defective?" Mr. Laurier took part in the discussion. *Le Pays* says that all who participated in the debate spoke in moderation, and that while they attacked the educational system which then prevailed, they were careful to say nothing that would give offence, or was calculated to antagonize the most sensitive and scrupulous among the champions of established educational methods. It must be remembered, however, that the system attacked was under strict clerical control, and all such discussion must have been distinctly unwelcome to the ecclesiastics. The meeting unanimously resolved that the system was defective and unsatisfactory. Mr. Laurier's name appears among the Vice-Presidents of the *Institut Canadien* for 1865 and 1866, and as he left Montreal in December, 1866, he doubtless held this office at the time of his removal to Arthabaskaville.

Mr. Laurier was one of the Committee of the

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Institut appointed in 1863 to interview Bishop Bourget, in the endeavour to reconcile the quarrel and overcome his interdiction. His associates on the Committee were the Hon. L. A. Dessaulles, then President of the *Institut*, Dr. J. E. Coderre, and the famous Joseph Doutre. They were politely received, but quite failed to elicit any definite statement from the unyielding Bishop. They submitted the library catalogue, and urged the Bishop to specify such books as were objectionable to the religious authorities. They undertook to put such books under lock and key, and to guarantee that they would not be read by anyone without his express permission. In February, 1864, the *Institut* stopped a lecture which was advertised to be delivered on "Reason and Faith," and in March it was formally resolved to have no discussions in the *Institut* that might touch religious susceptibilities. But Bishop Bourget could not be conciliated. He retained the library catalogue for six months, but kept a stern silence upon the points on which the Committee had sought instruction and enlightenment. Early in 1864 the Bishop issued a pastoral letter in condemnation of a lecture delivered before the *Institut* by Mr. Dessaulles, in which he said: "We will then pray that no evil may result to anyone from that dreadful monster Rationalism, which has anew lifted up its hideous head in the *Institut*, and which seeks to spread the infectious poison in a pamphlet, repeating the blasphemies

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uttered from that seat of pestilence." The truth is, that the Bishop was resolved to force the *Institut* into an absolute surrender, while upon the other hand the leaders of the *Institut* were just as determined to maintain the association and assert their indubitable right to freedom of opinion and freedom of discussion.

In 1866 Mr. Laurier's active connection with the *Institut* ceased in consequence of his removal from Montreal. But he was still to bear the consequences of his identification with the society, and it therefore becomes necessary to follow its fortunes further, and to see the end of the conflict which this resolute group of French Liberals waged for many long years against the ecclesiastical authorities.

When the *Institut* became finally convinced that relief from the clerical interdiction could not be obtained by direct appeal to Bishop Bourget, it was decided to make representations to the Head of the Church. Before making the appeal to Rome, a committee again visited the Bishop, and asked to have the objectionable books specified. The Bishop, however, replied that while there were such books in the library it was not his duty to indicate them, as it could lead to no practical result. The appeal was taken by seventeen Catholic members, and was a private proceeding, in which neither the Protestant members nor the *Institut* as a body were concerned. The *Institut* waited for four years,

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but Rome returned no answer, and in the meantime a new phase of the quarrel at home had developed.

At the celebration of the twenty-fourth anniversary of the *Institut* in 1868, Mr. Dessaulles delivered an address on tolerance, eloquent in composition, noble in teaching, and catholic in spirit. He said: "We form a society of students, and this society is purely laical. Is an association of laymen, not under direct religious control, permissible, speaking from a Catholic point of view? Is an association of laymen belonging to various religious denominations permissible from a Catholic point of view? What evil is there, in a country of mixed religious opinions, in men of mature mind belonging to different Christian sects, giving one another the kiss of peace on the field of science? What! Is it not permissible, when Protestants and Catholics are placed side by side in a country, in a city, for them to pursue together their career of intellectual progress? There are certain men who are never quiet except when they have made enemies both in the domain of conscience and of intelligence. Where do these men get their evangelical notions? Where then are prudence and simple good sense? There are those who, themselves a minority in the State, cannot endure persons of opposite opinions, and in whose mouth the word ostracism is always to be found. But we have no difficulty in enduring you with all your perversity of mind and of heart.

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Imitate, therefore, a good example, instead of setting a bad one. We therefore form a literary society of laymen. Our object is progress, work our means, tolerance our connecting tie. We have for all the respect which men of sincerity never withhold. There are hypocrites who see evil everywhere, and who fear it because they are acquainted with it."

Mr. Horace Greeley, of the New York *Tribune*, a great soldier of freedom, also spoke at the meeting, and in the course of his address pronounced this royal creed: "For the true Liberal, in the century in which we live, there is but one country, the World; but one religion, love to God and man; and one patriotism, to benefit and elevate the human family. We have for adversaries, tyranny, ignorance, superstition, and everything which oppresses or degrades." These and like utterances of noble and strenuous import appeared in the *Annuaire*, the annual report of the society for 1868, and greatly aggravated the quarrel between the clergy and the *Institut*.

In 1869 Gonzalve Doutre was sent to Rome to press the appeal against Bishop Bourget's interdiction, and the Bishop also visited Rome during the same year to attend the Vatican Council. Mr. Doutre was soon convinced that his protest would be ineffectual, and while he was still prosecuting his business, the Bishop sent out a pastoral letter to Canada announcing that the Pope had rejected the appeal and condemned the *Institut*. The people

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were forbidden to belong to the *Institut* while it taught pernicious doctrines, or to publish, retain, keep, or read the *Annuaire* of 1868; and it was further declared that all persons who persisted in remaining members of the *Institut*, or in reading the *Annuaire*, would be deprived of the sacraments.

When this pastoral reached Montreal the members of the *Institut* held a meeting and resolved, "(1) that the *Institut Canadien*, the object of whose foundation is purely literary and scientific, teaches no doctrine of any kind, and carefully excludes all teaching of pernicious doctrine; (2) that the Catholic members of the *Institut Canadien*, having learned of the condemnation of the *Annuaire* of 1868 of the *Institut Canadien* declare that they submit purely and simply to this decree." But this submission did not abate the attack nor remove the condemnation. Bishop Bourget wrote from Rome that these concessions were hypocritical and inadequate, and mainly, "because this act of submission forms part of a report unanimously approved by the *Institut*, in which a resolution is proclaimed, until then kept secret, which establishes the principle of religious toleration, which has been the principal ground of the condemnation of the *Institut*." There was, in fact, no refuge for the Catholic members of the *Institut*, except in absolute submission and dissolution of the society.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH AND THE PRINTER

ONE of the charges made against Mr. Laurier in the political campaigns of later years was that he was the companion of "apostates of the Chiniquy breed," of "excommunicated persons," and of "friends of Guibord." The story of Joseph Guibord reads like a tale set far back in the despotic ages.

This man Guibord was a printer, a French-Canadian Roman Catholic, of good character, and earnest religious spirit. It is said that for twenty years he personally superintended the composition and printing of Bishop Bourget's pastoral letters, and other work connected with the foreign missions of the Church. For ten years he put into type in the Indian language the catechism and hymns for the Roman Catholic missions in the North-West. The first book stereotyped in Canada was done under his supervision. He was, in fact, a scientific craftsman, greatly esteemed by his co-workers, and well considered by many of the Catholic ecclesiastics. He had, however, that vigour of mind and independence of spirit which seem to be born of the handling of types; and when the Church which he loved sought to control his judgment and crush out his individuality, he settled down to immovable

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resistance, and shamed many men who walked in higher ways by his quiet courage and fine assertion of the essential principles of human freedom. He became a member of the *Institut* two or three years after it was organized, was one of the two hundred members who refused to withdraw when the society was condemned on account of its possession of books that were covered by the Index at Rome, and also one of those who appealed to Rome against the attitude of the Bishop. He died suddenly on November 18th, 1869. A few weeks before his death he sent for a priest, who came and heard his confession. But, acting under the direct instructions of the Bishop, the priest refused to administer extreme unction unless Guibord would withdraw from the *Institut*. This he declined to do, and the last rites were not administered. He grew better and for some weeks seemed likely to recover, but death came at last so suddenly that it was impossible to get a priest to his bedside. Application was made for permission to bury the remains in the cemetery of Côte des Neiges, and was refused on the ground that as a member of the *Institut* he could not receive absolution, and therefore could not have ecclesiastical burial. M. Rousselot, the curé of Notre Dame, offered, however, to inter Guibord in that unconsecrated portion of the cemetery allotted to persons who are buried without religious rites. The widow was willing to accept burial in the cemetery proper without

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religious rites, but this also was refused. The remains were therefore temporarily deposited in a vault at the adjoining Protestant cemetery, and proceedings were immediately begun to cause the Church authorities to bury Guibord in the consecrated portion of Côte des Neiges.

Mr. Joseph Doutre and Mr. Laflamme, with whom Mr. Laurier had studied, appeared as counsel for the petitioners. Doutre was an heroic figure throughout the long and strenuous controversy in Quebec for the establishment of the principles of civil and religious liberty. His active participation in public affairs dated back to 1844, and as a young man he had penned an attack upon George E. Cartier which led to a meeting with pistols on the Chambly road, and bred between the two an incurable personal and political quarrel. He was a profound constitutional authority, an influential contributor to many of the public journals, and one of the most able and skilful advocates whom Quebec has produced. He was one of the leaders in the struggle for the abolition of the feudal tenure, and was conspicuous in the agitation to destroy the system of Crown nominations to the Legislative Council, and to establish an elective body. He was twice a candidate for election to the Parliament of united Canada, and twice defeated. His last political contest was fought in 1861, and thereafter he gave himself wholly to his profession. He was one of the Canadian counsel before the Halifax Fishery

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Commission appointed to determine the amount of compensation due to Canada under the terms of the Washington treaty; and he had a knowledge of the old French law such as few, if any, of his contemporaries possessed. He was the very soul of the great contest before the courts and before the people to force the Catholic ecclesiastics to bury Guibord in consecrated ground, and to establish the civil rights of the members of the *Institut Canadien*. We have outgrown many of his opinions. Some of these he outgrew as well. It is not the spirit of Joseph Doutre, in his hot and eager youth, which informs many of our social and political fashions and many of our most cherished institutions; but his superb courage and steadfast assertion of elementary human rights shine out with enduring lustre on the pages of Canadian history.

The application for a writ of mandamus to compel the burial of Guibord in consecrated ground was heard before Mr. Justice Mondelet. Seventeen days were spent in the arguments. It was contended in behalf of the ecclesiastical authorities that by the terms of the cession of Canada to Great Britain the Roman Catholic religion was to be free of all interference from the civil authorities, while counsel for Madame Guibord held that the right to an ecclesiastical burial was a civil right which the Church could not deny. Judge Mondelet, although a French-Canadian Roman Catholic, sustained the application and ordered a peremptory writ of man-

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damus to issue requiring the curé and fabrique of Notre Dame to bury the deceased within six days. The Church authorities appealed to the Court of Review, and there the decision of Mr. Justice Mondelet was reversed. It was maintained that action should have been taken against the curé personally, and that the writ was informal. Next came an appeal by counsel for the widow to the Court of Queen's Bench, consisting of one Protestant and four Roman Catholic judges. Mr. Doutre challenged the fitness of the Court to determine the issue on the ground that the Catholic judges, if faithful adherents of the Church, could not do justice in any cause which involved a conflict between civil and ecclesiastical laws. This seems to have been a harsh and ungracious proceeding, and one which finds small justification in the conduct of many of the Catholic judges of Lower Canada in great instances of conflict between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The Court rejected Mr. Doutre's petition, and held that his contention was equivalent to an accusation of treason and perjury against the Catholic judges. Doutre then moved for an appeal to the Privy Council of England, and the money necessary to prosecute the appeal before the court of last resort was provided by the *Institut Canadien* and Catholic and Protestant citizens of Montreal.

While these proceedings were in progress, Madame Guibord died. By her will she gave her

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property to the *Institut Canadien*, and also appointed that body her universal legatee. Leave was granted by the Privy Council to the *Institut* to continue the appeal in her behalf, and on June 17th, 1874, the case came formally before the Judicial Committee. Mr. Doutre appeared for the *Institut*, while the chief Canadian counsel for the Church was Mr. L. A. Jetté, of Montreal, who once defeated Sir George Cartier in Montreal East, and is now Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec.

The Privy Council in rendering judgment went into an exhaustive consideration of many of the issues involved, and particularly of the status of the Roman Catholic Church in Lower Canada, and the contention that under the terms of the cession of the country to Great Britain, the Church was independent of the civil authority. The Court held that there were no regular ecclesiastical courts in Lower Canada, such as existed and were recognized by the State when the Province formed part of the dominions of France. But it was pointed out that a bishop is always a *judex ordinarius*, according to the Canon Law, and may hold a court and deliver judgment. Unless such sentences were recognized there would exist no means of determining amongst the Roman Catholics of Canada the many questions touching faith and discipline, which, upon the admitted canons of their church, may arise. There was, however, no proof that any sentence of excommunication was ever passed

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against Guibord by the Bishop or any other ecclesiastical authority, and, therefore, the Court was relieved from the necessity of considering how far such a sentence, if passed, might have been examinable by the temporal court, when a question touching its legal effect and validity required to be determined. It was shown that Guibord had not wilfully abstained from receiving the sacraments of the Church, but that he was refused the sacraments when he desired to receive them, because he continued to be a member of the *Institut Canadien*. It was pointed out that the *et cætera* in the Quebec Ritual might be, according to the supposed exigency of the particular case, expanded so as to include within its ban any person being in habits of intimacy or conversing with a member of a literary society possessing a prohibited book; any person visiting a friend who possessed such a book; any person sending his son to a school in the library of which there was such a book, or going to a shop where such books were sold. Moreover, the Index which already forbade Grotius, Pascal, Pothier, Thaunus, and Sismondi, might be made to include all the writings of jurists, and all legal reports of judgments supposed to be hostile to the Church of Rome, so that the Roman Catholic lawyer might find it difficult to pursue the studies of his profession. Their Lordships declared that they were satisfied that such a discretionary enlargement of the categories in the Ritual would not have been deemed

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to be within the authority of the law of the Gallican Church as it existed in Canada before the cession; and in their opinion it was not established that there had been such an alteration in the status or law of that Church founded on the consent of its members as would warrant such an interpretation of the Ritual, and that the true and just conclusion of law on the point was that the fact of being a member of the *Institut* did not bring a man within the category of a public sinner to whom Christian burial could be legally refused.

It was further said that according to the ecclesiastical law of France, a personal sentence was in most cases required in order to constitute a man a public sinner, and that no evidence had been produced to establish the very grave proposition that Her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Lower Canada had consented since the cession to be bound by a rule which involved the recognition of the authority of the Inquisition, an authority never admitted but always repudiated by the old law of France. Their Lordships, therefore, decided that Guibord at the time of his death was not under any such valid ecclesiastical sentence or censure as would, according to the Quebec Ritual, or any law bearing upon Roman Catholics in Canada, justify the denial of ecclesiastical sepulture to his remains. They accordingly ordered the curé and fabrique of Notre Dame to permit the burial of Guibord in that part of the cemetery in which the remains of

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Roman Catholics who receive ecclesiastical burial were usually interred, and required the defendants to pay to the *Institut Canadien* all the costs of the widow in the Lower Courts and the cost of the appeal to the Judicial Committee, and said in closing : "Their Lordships cannot conclude without expressing their regret that any conflict should have arisen between the ecclesiastical members of the Roman Catholic Church in Montreal and the lay members belonging to the Canadian Institute. It has been their Lordships' duty to determine the questions submitted to them in accordance with what has appeared to them to be the law of the Roman Catholic Church in Lower Canada. If, as was suggested, difficulties should arise by reason of an interment without religious ceremonies in that part of the ground to which the mandamus applies, it will be in the power of the ecclesiastical authorities to obviate them by permitting the performance of such ceremonies as are sufficient for that purpose ; and their Lordships hope that the question of burial with such ceremonies will be reconsidered by them, and further litigation avoided."

Guibord's first funeral took place on Sunday, November 21st, 1869. Two hundred and fifty friends and sympathizers accompanied the body to the Catholic cemetery. The hearse was one used by Protestants, and at the gate the coffin was taken out and carried on a sleigh to the chapel. Burial was refused except in the strangers' lot,

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unconsecrated ground, where the bodies of suicides, and criminals dying without confession were interred. Protest and persuasion were alike futile to alter this decision, and the body was therefore returned to the hearse and conveyed to a vault in the Protestant cemetery. Here the remains lay until September 2nd, 1875, when, in pursuance of the judgment of the Privy Council, they were once more carried through the streets of Montreal, to be deposited in consecrated ground in the Catholic cemetery. The hearse was surmounted by a cross, and the British flag was thrown over the coffin. But when the procession reached the cemetery, the gates were found to be closed and barred, and a hostile mob of three or four hundred persons was gathered in the neighbourhood. The cortége was received with jeers and yells, the crowd rapidly increased, the driver of the hearse was forced to whip up his horses, and a shower of stones followed his retreat. The friends of the *Institut*, under the prudent and responsible leadership of Mr. Doutre, behaved with excellent judgment, and avoided a riot which might have had very serious consequences. Once more the body of Guibord was returned to the vault in the Protestant cemetery. During the afternoon the grave dug for its reception was filled up by a few of the rioters. It is not necessary, nor is it clear that it would be just, to hold the ecclesiastical authorities responsible for this outbreak of mob violence, and the tumult and

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excitement which the event caused throughout Montreal. The stubborn contest of the *Institut* with the Church had excited intense feeling in the breasts of many Roman Catholics, the tone of the clerical press was violent and inflammatory, the *Institut* itself had vehement and reckless defenders, sectarian animosities were thoroughly aroused, and the fact that the leaders of the *Institut* were Liberals, imported a savage partisan spirit into the controversy. On every hand fuel for a dangerous conflagration was provided, and it is only surprising that no graver consequences resulted.

The *Nouveau Monde* warned Mr. Doutre that to desire actually to force the gates of the cemetery and show his *mort* to the public was simply to drive the people to revolt. *La Minerve* suggested that the funeral had been postponed in order to await the arrival of "a troop of Orangemen and fanatical Grits from Upper Canada, who will be organized to strengthen the hands of our *Rouges*." These "wretched *Rouges* and apostates," the *Minerve* said, "without heart or patriotism, do not fear to excite Protestant and English fanaticism against their compatriots, and to ally themselves even with the sects of Upper Canada to shed the blood of their brethren." The *Rouge* party and the *Institut*, the paper declared, had dug their own grave in digging that of Guibord. The *Bien Public*, a French Liberal paper, maintained that the case was one which should never have come before the courts,

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but that to oppose by force the execution of the judgment of the Privy Council, was an act of unpardonable folly. Indictments were laid against fifteen of the rioters, but no bill was returned by the Grand Jury, and an attempt to maintain a suit for damages against the fabrique proved equally abortive. A guard was placed at the Protestant cemetery in consequence of rumours that the body of Guibord would be forcibly removed from the vault wherein it was deposited, but nothing occurred to show that this precaution was necessary. Guibord again reposed quietly in his temporary resting place until the final burial at Côte des Neiges, on November 16th, 1875.

On the Sunday before the third and successful attempt to bury Guibord, the Catholic priests in the city and district commanded their people not to go near the funeral, and to refrain from all disturbance. The Rev. V. Rousselot, curé of Notre Dame however, refused to perform the ecclesiastical rites over the remains, but attended the burial as a civil officer. He declared that he could not grant ecclesiastical sepulture, and the friends of Guibord could not effect or order his civil interment in the part of the cemetery consecrated by the prayers of the Church. "If" he added, "despite all this, you persist in your deplorable design, I am obliged to protest resolutely against the violation of the cemetery, of the laws of the Church, and of the liberties of Catholics in Lower Canada." An enormous crowd

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thronged the streets of Montreal, through which the procession passed, from the Protestant cemetery to Côte des Neiges, but everywhere quiet and decorum prevailed, and the presence of troops, called out for the occasion, was wholly unnecessary. The admonitions of the clergy were effectual, and in that very fact was striking evidence of the authority of the Church with the masses of its people. The gates of the cemetery opened to the body, which once again sought its bed in consecrated ground; the grave beside that of his wife lay open, the body was lowered, cement mixed with sheets of tin and scrap iron was filled in over the coffin, the top dressing of earth was added, and Guibord was at rest, and safe against the unsympathetic hand that would disturb his repose.

A few days after the attempted burial on September 2nd, Bishop Bourget issued a pastoral letter to the clergy, to the religious communities, and to all the faithful of his diocese. He said it was a necessity as well as a duty to endeavour to appease a certain agitation which had taken hold of minds, and which, fermenting from day to day, might lead to some fatal catastrophe. "That which has roused you up in such large numbers," he said, "is the fear that your cemetery, which you justly venerate as a holy place, might be profaned by the burial of a man dead in the disgrace and under the anathema of the Church." He commended the calm and moderate conduct of his people, and pointed

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out that effusion of blood would be a fresh profanation of the cemetery. He said, "If, on the one hand, we have managed all things so that the public peace was not troubled, we were, on the other, occupied with means to be taken so that the honour of the holy Church might be respected, and that the holy place should not be profaned. This was to declare, in virtue of the divine power which we exercise in the name of the Pastor of pastors, that the place where the body of this rebellious child of the Church would be deposited should be made separate from the rest of the consecrated cemetery, so that it would only be a profane place. For we do not have need to prove to you that in the solemn act of our consecration to God, full power was given us to bind and to loose, to bless and to curse, to consecrate persons, places and temples, and to interdict them, to separate from the body of the Church the members who dishonour and outrage her, to hand over to Satan those who hear not the Church, in order that they may henceforth be considered as pagans and publicans, so long as they return not to God by sincere penitence. It is upon these incontestable and uncontested principles of this divine authority that, desiring to maintain in all its integrity the discipline of the Church concerning the burial of its children, and to prevent, at the same time, all disorder for the future, we declare by these presents, in order that no one may be able to plead ignorance, that the

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part of the cemetery where the body of the late Joseph Guibord should be interred, if ever after this it is buried there, in any manner whatever, will be undone, and will, *ipso facto*, remain interdicted and separated from the rest of the cemetery." He pointed out that under these circumstances there was no pretext for violent opposition to the burial of Guibord in any part of the cemetery, since that part would become interdict and separated from the holy place.

At a meeting of the bishops held at Quebec in October, the conduct of the *Institut* and the judgment of the Privy Council were considered. The bishops declared that the Catholic Church in Canada was threatened in her liberty and in her most sacred rites, and that the first authors of the outrage had been brought up on the knees of a Catholic mother. "To palliate this criminal usurpation they have invoked the pretended Gallican Liberties, as if Catholic unity, founded by Jesus Christ with the supreme authority of Peter and his successors, were but an empty name. What authority is that which by invoking his liberties the subject can escape? What prince, what republic, would acknowledge such a principle if appealed to by a province, notwithstanding the oft-repeated declarations of the Constitution and the supreme tribunals of the State?" In a later pastoral from Bishop Bourget, issued before the final burial of Guibord and read in the Catholic churches, he reviewed in

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detail many of the facts and incidents of the long and painful controversy, and touched upon the judgment of the Privy Council. He admitted that Guibord was not warned and denounced by name, but insisted that he was under the sentence of excommunication pronounced against all who belonged to the *Institut Canadien*. He pointed out that by withdrawing the grave from consecrated ground he had safeguarded the liberty of the Church without entering into conflict with authority. He said that the Gallican Liberties, to which appeal was made in behalf of Guibord, were not recognized even in France, and could not be set up to authorize encroachments on the Church in Canada. He continued: "This decision might not have been given if the noble lords who compose the Privy Council and who advised Her Majesty could have been able to assure themselves that it would have tended to strangely grieve the bishops of this country, whose loyalty has never been denied; to wound the religious feelings of a devoted people, who have on all occasions joined fidelity to their Sovereign with attachment to their religion; to cause Catholics in this country to fear that it is wished to deprive them of their religious liberty; to cast into this province a brand of discord which it might be very difficult to extinguish; and to excite between citizens of different races and religions antipathies and hatreds that might have very serious results."

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On the Sunday succeeding the funeral, still another pastoral letter from Bishop Bourget was read in the Catholic churches of his diocese. In this he rejoiced in the docility of the people to the voice of their pastors, and expressed his satisfaction that the unhappy affair had terminated without bloodshed. He declared that it was respect for the cemetery and the fear lest it were profaned by the burial of a man dead in the disgrace of the Church, which revolted many Catholics and led them to oppose the entrance of his body into Côte des Neiges. He reminded the people that the threat which was made had been accomplished, and that the place where the rebellious child of the Church had been laid was now separated from the rest of the consecrated cemetery and could be no more anything but a profane place. He proceeded: "This is a fact accomplished with so much solemnity, and amid circumstances so deplorable, that it will remain deeply graven in the memory of the numerous strangers who shall visit the cemetery, as well as in that of citizens who shall daily go thither to pour forth their prayers. Each in casting sadly his regards on that tomb which is not covered with the blessings of heaven because it is separated from the holy ground that the Church has blessed, will give way to emotions more or less painful. 'Here lies,' he will exclaim in the recesses of his soul, 'the body of the too famous Joseph Guibord, who died in rebellion against the common Father of the

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Church, under the anathema of the Church ; who could not pass the gates of this sacred place save escorted by armed men, as if for battle against the enemies of the country ; who, but for the good disposition of his fellow-citizens, would have caused blood to flow ; who was conducted to this sepulchre, not under the protection of the Cross, but under that of the bayonets of the military ; who has been laid in this grave in two feet of earth, not to the impressive chant of the prayers which the Church is accustomed to make for her children, but amid the curses contained in the breasts of the attendants ; for whom the priest obliged to be present could perform no religious ceremony ; could utter no prayer for the repose of his soul ; could not say a single *requiescat in pace* ; could not, in short, sprinkle a single drop of holy water, whose virtue it is to moderate and quench the flames of the terrible fire that purifies souls in the other world.’”

Two letters from Archbishop Lynch, of Toronto, which appeared in *The Globe* during September, 1875, form an interesting chapter in the strange and stormy history of the *Institut Canadien*. He asked if the Fenian organization were established in Canada and put under the ban of the Church like the *Institut*, and if one of the members at his last moments refused to renounce the society and accepted in preference to die without the sacraments of the Church, would the Privy Council of the

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Queen absolve the memory of the man and force the Church to give him ecclesiastical burial? He could not think so. Nor, he argued, would the Protestants, and especially the Orangemen, willingly acquiesce in what they would consider an unjust decree of a Catholic Sovereign, in a like case where they would be the aggrieved. He went on to say that the French Canadian in coming under British rule had gained one immense advantage in that he was cut off from revolutionary France when infidelity commenced to permeate and ruin all classes, especially the lower, of French society. Hence, the descendants of the French immigrants grew up a religious and loyal people. But in the course of time, well-to-do Canadians revisited France and brought back the seeds of irreligion and too much independence. To foster and perpetuate these evil plants they formed the *Institut Canadien*, and filled their library with books fetid with the most rampant infidelity, such as was destroying the faith and morality of France. The Bishop of Montreal desired to have these books removed, and required that a priest of his appointment should watch over the morality of the library and the members of the *Institut*. This, he contended, was not beyond the faculties of a bishop of the Catholic Church in his treatment of those who professed to owe him obedience, and who wished to receive from him the sacraments.

But the *Institut*, wrote the Archbishop, retained

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its library and continued its opposition, and was consequently proscribed. The evil ceased to become greater because good Catholics no longer joined the society. He believed that Protestants of the various religious communities would likewise refuse communion to the man who would disobey the formal injunction of their synod or conference. He argued that it would be an outrage for the State to force any religious community to bury with religious ceremonies the body of one of their members, who, whilst he was alive, was excommunicated. The lot in the cemetery of the Cote des Neiges was sold with the condition, expressed or understood, that it was sold for the burial of those only who died in communion with the Church. When that condition was wanting the lot was forfeited. The Catholic Church, however, provided for the burial of those who died out of her fold, and in every cemetery a place was set apart for the burial of such persons. The State, in the case of Guibord, was interfering in matters not of its competency, but the interference must be tolerated in order to avoid a greater evil. He declared that if the case happened in Toronto he would hold himself neutral. The State could use the power of force and bury the body in the consecrated cemetery, but he would give no active assistance. He would then order the grave to be fenced in, and would proceed to consecrate the rest of the cemetery. He did not think the ashes of a notorious sinner who died unrepent-

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ant would injure the souls or bodies of those whose bones lay in the cemetery. Nor would the bones of mad dogs or other unclean animals cause contamination. He was not surprised that the Catholics of Montreal were outraged over the desecration of their cemetery, but they should not expose their lives in resisting the State. If they were commanded to renounce their faith, then they should suffer martyrdom rather than obey imperial mandates, as the early Christians did.¹

Mr. Joseph Doutre, in a letter to *The Globe* of September 15th, dealt at length with the statements of the Archbishop. He argued that until recent changes in the constitution of the Catholic Church the old ecclesiastical law of France was still the ecclesiastical law of Lower Canada. From time immemorial, Catholic France, both at home and in the colonies, had maintained that the sepulture of the dead, even in the time when ecclesiastical courts were in full operation, was exclusively cognizable by civil court. The law never allowed excommunication unless it were publicly denounced and personal, after admonitions. The French ecclesiastical and public law, as left to Lower Canada at the time of the treaty of cession, also gave to the civil courts the right to examine whether excommunication, when pronounced, was conformable in its causes with the canons or not. The members of the *Institut Canadien* were never excommunicated,

¹ *Toronto Globe*, September 10th and 11th, 1875.

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even collectively, and Guibord was never excommunicated, either collectively with others, or personally. He denied that the library was filled with infidel books, pointed out that no such sweeping charge had ever been made by Bishop Bourget, and mentioned that when a similar charge was made by the *Nouveau Monde*, an action for libel taken by the *Institut* was maintained. He said that members of the *Institut* had not claimed the right to read a disapproved book, but had held and asserted the right to be members of a literary society which might have condemned books in its library. If they were wrong, no Catholic could be a member of Parliament, inasmuch as the library of Parliament contained books condemned at Rome. He met other points raised by the Archbishop, and which have been covered in the course of this record, and concluded, "The Guibord case will have this beneficial influence on the future of this country ; it will teach those who invoke treaties and law that these facts act both ways; that rights have their correlative duties; that no one has the privilege of using rights and repudiating duties; that there is only one Sovereign over these lands, the civil and political government; that any attempt to defy that authority may have the support of a few, but will be frowned down by all men of any worth or standing, without distinction of creed or nationality."

The credit and fortunes of the *Institut* were greatly shaken by these destructive and tumultuous

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proceedings. A stern and gallant band heroically withstood the assaults of the clergy, but few new members were added, and Catholics naturally shrank from identification with the society. By 1875 the membership had been reduced to 150, and half of these were English. Thereafter the support which the *Institut* received from the Catholic people steadily declined, and the necessity for Protestant support was less apparent. Finally the books and papers were handed over to the Fraser Institute, a free Public Library, founded by the bequest of Hugh Fraser, a Scottish Protestant citizen of Montreal, and the active work of the *Institut Canadien* terminated. The Fraser Institute has about 41,000 books, and of these the *Institut Canadien* contributed 8,000. The chief librarian is French, and the assistants speak French. There is no other free library in Montreal except that in the basement of the Jesuit Church, and that in the *Cercle .Ville Marie*, controlled by the Sulpicians. These libraries are rather for theological students than serious attempts to supply literary and scientific works. The result is that one-half of the patrons of the Fraser Institute are French Canadians, who read not only science and literature which the Jesuits and Sulpicians might supply, but who may also obtain there books proscribed by the Index, and even such books as invited the condemnation of the *Institut Canadien*. The *Institut*, however, still exists in name, and meets once a year for the election of

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officers. At the last meeting there were three members present. It was a long chase, but the Church was in at the death.¹

¹ The material in this and the preceding chapter has been gathered mainly from the newspapers and periodicals of the time, and from a pamphlet issued from the office of the Montreal *Witness* in 1875, entitled "History of the Guibord Case; Ultramontanism versus Law and Human Rights." The writer of the pamphlet is, no doubt, unfriendly to the Ultramontanes. The *Witness*, like *Le Pays*, was condemned by Bishop Bourget.

CHAPTER IV

QUEBEC AT THE UNION

WHEN Mr. Laurier began the practice of law at Montreal, political conditions in Canada were thoroughly unsettled. George E. Cartier had joined hands with John A. Macdonald and George Brown to promote Confederation, while the leaders of the Liberal party in Quebec had broken with their old allies of Upper Canada, and assumed the leadership of the forces opposed to the coalition and to Confederation. There was something pathetic in the separation of Brown and Dorion. With a fine and beautiful chivalry Dorion had borne with Brown's harsh and inconsiderate attacks upon his church, his race, and his province, and had set the great public objects which they had in common far above private resentments and momentary irritations. The policy of Brown doomed Dorion to a hopeless struggle in his own province, and shut him out even from the sympathetic regard of the mass of his compatriots. His authority declined. He suffered personal defeat. He was superseded in the leadership of his own party in Lower Canada. But despite defeat and contumely, loss of influence, and exclusion from office, his allegiance to Brown remained unshaken, and no word of.

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reproach or of protest passed his lips. United by a positive personal affection, and bound to a common programme, the two men held together with simple good faith and unflinching tenacity ; and the chivalry of Dorion was the seal of the compact.

Canada has had few nobler public servants than Antoine Dorion. A man of magnanimous spirit, of beautiful character, and of rare sagacity, he fought through a long public career, in a bitter and factious time, without a stain upon his shield, unsoured by reverses, and untouched by sordid bargainings for the spoils or the dignities of office. Though small in stature, his was still a commanding presence, and though his manner was grave and restrained, his gracious bearing invited approach and confidence, while the music of his voice, the nobility of his face, and his clear and reasoned utterance, gave grace and authority to all that he said in the private circle, in the court-room, and from the platform. A statesman hardly less great than any that Canada has produced, he was also a great advocate, and he furnishes an unusual instance of authority at the bar unimpaired by continuous absorption in politics. Formidable as he was in Parliament and on the political platform, his heart was probably always in his profession rather than in the business of the State, and it was fitting that he should close his career as Chief-Justice of his native province. His separation from Brown and

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the Liberals of Upper Canada was of short duration. He opposed the terms rather than the idea of Confederation, and when the union was accomplished, and Mr. Brown had withdrawn from the Coalition Government, all sections of the Liberal party reunited under the leadership of Brown and Mackenzie in Ontario, and of Dorion and Holton in Quebec. It may be that the heartiness of the old understanding between Brown and Dorion was never quite restored, but to the last they entertained for each other a sincere friendship and a great respect, and no sincerer or more impressive mourner stood before the open grave of George Brown than Sir Antoine Dorion.¹

It was not by the French Liberals alone that the terms of the union were condemned in Quebec. Dorion, the French Catholic, was joined by Joly, the French Protestant, while Holton and Dunkin and Huntington, who ranked with Galt as leaders

¹ The famous "Joe" Rymal, of Wentworth, who, by the way, opposed Confederation, in a speech at the Reform Convention of 1867, said: "The Reformers of Upper Canada were called upon to express all the gratitude possible for the manner in which the Lower Canadian leaders had stood by them. Of Mr. Dorion no one had cause to complain. If there had been a statesman in the Canadian Legislature for the past ten years—if there had been an honest politician in the whole box and dice of them—Mr. Dorion was the man. When he was enticed to sin he would not consent—he would not follow the multitude to do evil. If there was one thing which, more than anything else, made coalition distasteful, it was the fact that these men whom we were forced to respect had been excluded. None of them went in, and, thank God, none of them had to go out."

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of the English minority in the Lower Province, alike opposed Confederation on the basis of the resolutions of the Quebec Conference. Cartier, with excellent temper and just enough of extravagance to season the observation, declared during the Confederation debates that the Quebec resolutions were accepted by all men of moderate opinions, and opposed by socialists, democrats, and annexationists. He said the *Institut Canadien* had constituted itself a champion of religion, and professed to fear that the religious rights of French Canadians would suffer under the new arrangement. The *Montreal Witness*, a mouthpiece of English Protestantism, contended that under Confederation the British Protestant minority would lie at the mercy of the French Canadians; while the *True Witness*, founded to defend the Roman Catholic Church against the attacks of John Dougall's paper, held that if Confederation were established, the French Canadians would be doomed and their nationality and religion destroyed.¹

This is perhaps an exaggerated and partisan account of the situation, but it is nevertheless true that all these extreme elements were united against the project of union accepted by the Coalition Government. Holton and Huntington were greatly concerned to provide adequate protection for the educational and religious rights of the Protestant minority in Quebec; Cartier was equally deter-

¹ "Confederation Debates," page 61.

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mined to guarantee the separate schools of the Catholic minority in Ontario and the other English provinces ; while a group of the younger and more aggressive French Liberals of Quebec, under the leadership of Dorion, if not quite of the spirit of Dorion, denounced Confederation as a conspiracy to anglicize French Canada and place French Canadians at the mercy of a majority hostile to their religious and national rights. They argued that the provision in the new Constitution for a federal veto over provincial legislation, and the power granted to the English provinces to increase their representation according to population, while Lower Canada was condemned to a stationary representation, would subject French Canadians to the rule of a majority that would forever increase, and sooner or later invite conflicts which must destroy the political influence of the French element in Lower Canada. It was, in short, contended upon the one hand that French Canadian nationality and the privileges of the Catholic Church would be imperilled by Confederation, and upon the other, that English nationality and the educational and religious rights of Protestants would be exposed to danger in Lower Canada under the provincial Government. It was in order to provide against these conflicting dangers that the educational clauses were inserted in the Confederation agreement, mainly under the direction and inspiration of A. T. Galt, and that Cartier and Brown

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successfully contended against John A. Macdonald for a federal rather than a legislative union.¹

The most convincing and destructive arguments against the plan of Confederation were made by Mr. Dunkin and Mr. Dorion. Dunkin's speech occupied two days in delivery, and must always rank as a great contribution to the political literature of Canada. It is a grave and scholarly treatment of many phases of the controversy, elevated in tone and invincibly honest in premise and conclusion. It is the speech of a pessimist, but of a pessimist under severe restraint; the speech of a man deter-

¹ Mr. A. T. Galt was a son of John Galt, the author and founder of the Canada Land Company. He spent his early years in the service of the company, and was one of the pioneer railway and steamship promoters of Canada. He first entered Parliament as member for Sherbrooke in 1849. He was Inspector-General in the Cartier-Macdonald Government and Minister of Finance in the Coalition Government organized to carry Confederation. He withdrew from the Government in 1866 on account of its failure to pass legislation securing to the English minority of Lower Canada a fair share of the public funds for Protestant schools and a Protestant Board of Education. Later, however, Galt consented to be one of the delegates to Great Britain to perfect the scheme of Confederation, on satisfactory pledges from John A. Macdonald and his fellow delegates that the rights of the Protestant minority of Quebec would receive adequate protection. In fulfilment of this pledge, the clauses guaranteeing Protestant schools to the Quebec minority, and Separate schools to the Catholic minority of Ontario were inserted in the British North America Act.

Edward Goff Penny, editor of the Montreal *Herald*, and afterwards a Dominion Senator, in a pamphlet issued in 1867 entitled "The Proposed British North American Confederation : Why it Should not be Imposed upon the Colonies by Imperial Legislation," said : "After the Confederation scheme had taken the form of the Quebec Constitution, a fear was entertained that it would meet with opposition from a majority in

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mined to eschew the cant and buncombe of parish politics, and reason upon high grounds to logical results. Much that he predicted has come to pass with consequences the reverse of what he expected, and many of his conclusions have been discredited by events. The acquisition of the West, the admission of British Columbia into the Confederation, and the construction of a railway from older Canada across the Rocky Mountains and on to the Pacific sea, in which he foresaw ruin and bankruptcy, and classed among the wild dreams of optimistic visionaries, are accomplished facts, and the fabric of the

Lower Canada—one of the intended members of the Confederation. This majority was likely to be composed of two elements; one being the representatives of the isolated English-speaking and Protestant populations of Canada East. These gentlemen saw clearly that, cut off from Protestant Upper Canada, they would lose all influence in the legislation upon such subjects as were to be committed to the local legislature, and their experience did not reassure them as to the consequences, especially in matters connected with schools, where differences of nationality are likely to be widened by difference of religion. In order to prevent them from voting against the measure, therefore, it was thought necessary to give them guarantees: but as the avowal of that intention would have probably destroyed the Catholic majority, the adhesion of the Protestant members was retained by a secret and confidential letter addressed to one of them by the Finance Minister on behalf of his colleagues, containing a promise that the required security should be given in the local Constitution which was to be enacted in the next session—a promise which, when the time came, was broken, for the same reason which made it necessary to keep it secret when it was given. The writer has no belief in the efficacy of any such special guarantees in favour of a class under a system of popular government. He does not complain, therefore, that the promise made was not kept; but he records the fact to show the unconstitutionality, and irregularity, and deception which has tainted the prosecution of this design from the beginning and throughout.”

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union stands strong and unimpaired. It is just as true, however, that he accurately foretold many of the shifts and expedients, in violation of the terms of union, that have been employed to conciliate dissatisfied communities ; and warned with the voice of a prophet, against the invitation to excessive provincial expenditures concealed in the arrangement for subsidizing the provinces out of the federal treasury ; against the temptation to provide local works at the national expense, for party rather than for national purposes ; and against the conflicting sectional, racial, and sectarian elements, which would demand representation in the federal Cabinet. The speech fails in that it is purely destructive, and while accepting the legislative union of Upper and Lower Canada as a desirable condition, offers no remedy for the humiliating breakdown in government which precipitated the negotiations for Confederation, and neglects altogether to suggest any alternative for the system of provincial subsidies, which were the only substantial compensation to the provinces for the surrender of customs duties, and would seem to have been an absolute necessity to the creation of the Commonwealth.¹

Mr. Holton and Mr. Joly canvassed the agreement with skill and prevision, but their speeches do not show the insight and power of Dorion. Joly accepted the contention that Confederation would be fatal to the interests of Lower Canada, and in

¹ "Confederation Debates," pages 482, 544.

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view of his Protestant faith and his subsequent dealing with racial and religious agitations the grounds of his antagonism are remarkable. For example, he said: "I object to the proposed Confederation, first as a Canadian, without reference to origin, and secondly as a French Canadian. From either point of view I look upon the measure as a fatal error, and as a French Canadian I once more appeal to my fellow countrymen, reminding them of the precious inheritance confided to their keeping—an inheritance sanctified by the blood of their fathers, and which it is their duty to hand down to their children as unimpaired as they received it."¹ Notwithstanding this declaration, no one will find in Mr. Joly's long and distinguished career anything savouring of a narrow racialism, or other than frank acceptance of all the obligations, and courageous performance of all the duties, of a robust Canadian citizenship.

Mr. Holton condemned the project of union submitted from the Quebec Conference as premature and immature. He contended for adequate guarantees for the educational rights of the English minority in Quebec. He held that the cost of defence would be greatly and burdensomely increased. He objected to the construction of the Intercolonial Railway over the route suggested, and insisted that the cost must materially exceed the estimates, and that the Upper Provinces could receive no adequate return for the

¹ "Confederation Debates," page 362.

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money that would be sunk in the undertaking. He was dissatisfied also with the proposed distribution of the public debt among the various provinces, and argued generally that Upper and Lower Canada must bear an inordinate share of the burdens of the new commonwealth, and that under existing circumstances to shoulder the obligations and assume the responsibilities which the new arrangement involved must prejudice all the future of the British Colonies in North America.¹

Mr. Dorion penetrated the new Constitution with the eye of a seer and the prescience of a statesman. He declared himself in favour of a confederation of Upper and Lower Canada, but was against the inclusion of the Eastern Provinces upon the onerous terms proposed. In fact, Mr. Dorion, as far back as 1856, had suggested the substitution of a confederation of the two Canadas for the existing legislative union, and in 1859 he had joined with Dessaulles, Drummond and McGee, in a manifesto which declared that a change in the Constitution of the country was necessary, and that "the logical alternative now presented to the people of Lower Canada would, therefore, seem to be dissolution or federation on the one hand, and representation according to population on the other." He had said also in 1861 that the time might come when it would be necessary to have a confederation of all the provinces, but he could not think that time had

¹ "Confederation Debates," pages 17, 148, 661, 704, 769, 940.

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yet arrived. This position he now maintained. He was still favourable to a federal union of Upper and Lower Canada, but he could not accept the wider scheme of Confederation, with its excessive financial generosity to the Eastern Provinces. These terms would impose greatly increased taxation upon Upper and Lower Canada, and bring no compensating advantages. He protested against the great cost of constructing the Intercolonial Railway, and insisted that the route should be definitely determined, before the country was hopelessly committed to Confederation. He predicted heavy and increasing expenditures for defence, and mainly for the advantage of the Eastern Provinces, as under the terms proposed ten-twelfths of the cost of defence must be borne by the two Canadas. He was opposed to a nominated Senate, and pointed out that the Upper Chamber, if the plan of selection from the existing Legislative Councils were adopted, would be filled with the nominees of four provincial Conservative Governments. It would take a century to secure a Liberal majority in a Senate thus constituted, and the appointed Chamber would exist as a menace and obstruction to Liberal legislation.¹ He objected also to the large powers of veto vested in the Federal Government, and saw in this feature of the Constitution a certain source of conflict between the local and central authorities. He

¹ From 1878 to 1902 no Liberal was appointed to the chairmanship of a Senate Committee.

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argued that friction and confusion must arise under the provision which gave to federal ministers the nomination and maintenance of judges, while the Legislatures controlled the constitution of the courts, and determined the number of judges to be appointed. The whole project, he contended, was designed to end in a legislative union, and assimilate the whole people to the dominant population. He therefore demanded that the question of Confederation, and the terms upon which it was proposed to establish the new commonwealth, should be submitted to the people, or Parliament dissolved and the members required to go back to their constituencies for approval of their course, before the basis of union was finally ratified.¹

It will be admitted that Mr. Dorion touched many of the weak spots in the new Constitution, and that many of the conflicts which he foresaw have arisen in the practical working of the instrument. If these conflicts were less destructive than he predicted, it is because Liberal statesmen and Canadian and Imperial judges have maintained the federal character of the Constitution, and widened rather than restricted the legislative sphere of the provinces. Thus far, however, his forebodings for the French Canadian people have had slight verification, for it is hardly an exaggeration to say that no Government has existed since Confederation which was not supported by a majority of the

¹ "Confederation Debates," pages 245, 269.

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constituencies of Quebec, and was not charged with subserviency to the French province. Racial and religious minorities almost invariably exercise their full political weight under a system of popular government.

It will be remembered that Mr. John Sandfield Macdonald and Mr. Malcolm Cameron, both influential and distinguished among the public men of Upper Canada, joined Dorion and his Quebec allies in their resistance to Confederation, and Joseph Howe, of Nova Scotia, conducted a violent and inflammatory campaign against ratification of the terms of union without submission to the people. John Sandfield Macdonald argued well for a plebiscite, but in dealing with the actual propositions before Parliament he was often ineffective and inconclusive. He rather stood aside with a sneer on his face, and in much that he said there was something very like contempt for the plans and prophecies of the builders of Confederation. This was his mood all through life. He had the patience and the determination to do good work with the tools in hand, but he had no heart for the fashioning of new implements, and seemed to feel that constitution-mongering was a pastime for theorists rather than the practical business of governing statesmen. Although a Roman Catholic, he was, in the main, hostile to separate schools, and, notwithstanding his acceptance of the Scott measure extending the privileges of separate schools in Ontario, he offered

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an amendment during the Confederation debates vesting in the provincial Legislatures the absolute authority over education.¹

It is more surprising that Mr. John Hillyard Cameron, who had some claims to leadership in the Orange Conservative element of Upper Canada, and was himself a supporter of the Quebec resolutions, should have joined Dorion and John Sandfield Macdonald in the demand for a constitutional appeal to the people before the resolutions were submitted for final action to the Imperial Parliament, and should have actually offered an amendment to that effect.² The action must have been displeasing to John A. Macdonald, and particularly as it was so acceptable to the opponents of Confederation. The Conservative leader refrained, however, from any manifestation of his displeasure, and in discussing the amendment treated Mr. Cameron with scrupulous courtesy and respect.³

In fact, nowhere does John A. Macdonald show to better advantage than during the Confederation

¹ "Confederation Debates," page 1026.

² "Confederation Debates," pages 962, 975.

³ John A. Macdonald described Hillyard Cameron's speech as an eloquent and convincing argument for Confederation. John Sandfield Macdonald interrupted with the remark, "What a compliment!" John A. retorted, "It may be a compliment, but it is not flattery. A compliment is the statement of an agreeable truth; flattery is the statement of an agreeable untruth. Now, were I to state that the honourable member for Cornwall delivered an eloquent and convincing speech, that would be flattery, but when I state in all sincerity, that the speech of the honourable member for Peel was an eloquent and convincing one, I may compliment, but I do not flatter."

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debates. This may be said with equal truth of Brown and Cartier. They were firm in purpose, resourceful in appeal and argument, and thoroughly equal to any situation which the controversy developed. They were likewise uniformly courteous and conciliatory, manifestly conscious of the gravity of the issues under consideration, and profoundly concerned to carry the great business to a successful and honourable conclusion. No one risked more than Cartier. No one like Cartier was under suspicion among his own people and confronted by a hostile sentiment in his own province. No one, perhaps, was more influential in determining the character of the federal constitution. He put into that instrument the principles of constitutional government which he had learned in the school of Papineau, and fought for in the Rebellion of 1837; and he established against successful legal or political assault the ample constitutional powers of the provinces. No doubt Cartier's chief reliance against the rising tide of hostile sentiment in Quebec, was in the Catholic clergy. These were distinctly favourable to the scheme of union, and the fact has profound significance in the making of confederated Canada. Without Cartier and the Catholic ecclesiastics of Quebec, the union of 1867 could not have been accomplished.

The demand for a plebiscite on the scheme of Confederation was very strongly supported in Lower Canada. A score of French Canadian coun-

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tics passed resolutions to that effect, and petitions against final action in advance of a popular vote, signed by more than twenty thousand persons, were sent in to Parliament. Many public meetings were held throughout the province, at which addresses were made by A. A. Dorion, L. O. David, Médéric Lanctôt, J. B. E. Dorion, and other active opponents of the plan of Confederation. Mr. Laurier spoke at one of these meetings, held at Ste. Julie in Montcalm County, on February 22nd, 1865. *Le Pays* fails to give a summary of the speech, but says that he supported the arguments of other speakers, and that resolutions against Confederation, or at least declaratory of the policy of Dorion, were unanimously adopted.

During all but a few months of the two years that Mr. Laurier practised law at Montreal he was the junior partner of M. Lanctôt, one of the chief agitators against Confederation. Upon his admission to the bar in October, 1864, he formed a partnership with Oscar Archambault and Henri L. Desaulniers, under the firm name of Laurier, Archambault, and Desaulniers. All three had passed through McGill together, and Laurier and Desaulniers had ranked equal for the degree of B.C.L. This partnership was more agreeable than profitable. They found that clients came slowly, and that it was a considerable undertaking for even three brilliant young students to build up a law business in Montreal. The firm was therefore

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dissolved, and in April, 1865, Mr. Laurier entered into partnership with Lanctôt. Of the members of his first firm only himself survives.

The association with Lanctôt was probably not wholly conducive to the natural development of Mr. Laurier's character. Lanctôt was a fiery and turbulent politician, of that class who come uppermost in seasons of great social and political unrest, urge extreme remedies for evils they unconsciously magnify, command the noisy adherence of an evanescent faction, and then pass into obscurity and neglect as conditions settle and the saner forces of the community regain control. His father was a notary of St. Remi, who was arrested in 1838 for the part he took in the Rebellion, and exiled for many years to Australia. The son was born a few weeks before his father's deportation, and inherited the father's spirit and the father's temperament. He studied law with Joseph Doutre, and at twenty years of age was selected to edit *Le Pays*. In 1860 he resigned his editorial office, and established himself as an advocate. Still later he founded *La Presse*, and in 1865, in order to retain his clients, took Mr. Laurier into partnership. Lanctôt plunged into the agitation against Confederation, and in association with L. A. Jetté, Desiré Girouard, L. O. David, and other young and aggressive spirits, established *L'Union Nationale* as the chief organ of the anti-union movement. Mr. Jetté, as was said elsewhere, is now Sir Louis Jetté,

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Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec; Mr. Girouard, after many years of distinguished service in the House of Commons, is a judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, and Mr. David, the life-long friend of Mr. Laurier, is City Clerk of Montreal. In 1867 Lanctôt ran for Parliament for Montreal East against Cartier, but was defeated, and subsequently was ruined by unwise and venturesome speculation. He then went to the United States, changed his religion, established a Protestant paper, and made strenuous war upon the Catholic Church. This, like so many other of his journalistic ventures, had a short life, and he was soon back in Montreal. He formed new political alliances, and supported Cartier against Jetté in 1872, when the Conservative leader was defeated by 1,300. In 1875 he assumed the editorship of the *Courrier* of Ottawa, and afterwards became a stenographer for the House of Commons. When he died in 1877 he was but thirty-nine years of age. He was an able advocate, a capable journalist, and a political orator of remarkable skill and power. But, as the brief record shows, he was unsteady, erratic, and violent, carried on from extreme to extreme by the passions and prejudices of the moment, and often at the merey of his greed for power, fortune and popularity.¹

During the brief term of Lanctôt's partnership

¹ See a sketch of Médéric Lanctôt in "Mes Contemporains," by L. O. David.

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with Mr. Laurier the firm's clients were received in the editorial offices of *L'Union Nationale*, and Mr. Laurier seems to have devoted himself chiefly to their interests and to the prosecution of his profession. He seldom contributed to the paper, and had no responsibility for its policy on public questions. The office of *L'Union Nationale* was on the first floor of an old house on Ste. Thérèse street, long since demolished and replaced by a more modern structure. Though it was a breeding place of faction and a nursery of extreme opinions, all the confusion and clamour, all the shouting and stamping, had no enduring, if indeed any temporary, effect upon Mr. Laurier's opinions, and still less upon his manner and character. He could not adopt the ways of even sincere demagogism, and his admirable balance of mind and temper kept him from intemperate courses and rash decisions.

Although surrounded by an atmosphere of political pessimism as well as of racial narrowness, he spoke even then the language of fervent Canadian patriotism that he speaks to-day. Since his earliest utterances he has never said a word that breathes the spirit of racial bigotry, or warms the idea of a separate national existence for the people of Quebec. He seems to have acquired at a very early age a singularly clear grasp of the main principles of free parliamentary government, and there is a remarkable maturity in his earliest appreciations of the spirit and efficiency of British institutions.

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It was here that Mr. Laurier was first introduced to Dr. Fréchette. One day, writes Dr. Fréchette in a sketch of Mr. Laurier which appeared some years ago, as the junior partner was leaving the office on the way to the Court House, Lanctôt said, "Let me introduce you to M. Laurier, my partner in this struggling firm of lawyers. A future Minister!" Laurier smiled, exchanged a few pleasant words with Dr. Fréchette, and passed out. When he had gone Lanctôt added with enthusiasm, "There is a head for you! Did you notice it? The young man who has it on his shoulders is sure to make himself heard of yet in the world. Why, sir, he is a poet, an orator, a philosopher, a jurist—I cannot pretend to enumerate all his talents; but mark my words, he is a coming man. Do not forget that face."¹

He was as much a student during these years at Montreal and later at Arthabaskaville as he had been at L'Assomption College and at McGill. His mastery of the English tongue and love of English books greatly influenced his character and opinions. At this time he spoke and wrote chiefly in French, while he read in English and even thought in English. This implied no lack of love for the brilliant language of literature and diplomacy which was his birthright. He has always revered his native tongue, and facing an unsympathetic Parliament on a memorable occasion in the mid-stream of his political career he uttered the fine sentence,

¹ Taché's "Men of the Day," 2nd series, page 13.

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“So long as there are French mothers the language will not die.”¹ But he was quick to recognize the fact that on this continent English must be the language of commerce, of politics, and of literature, and that a command of English speech was essential to full and effective participation in the life of the community. Even in youth he had to meet the taunt that he spoke French with an English accent, and it was sought to use the gibe to his discredit among his compatriots. But he smiled at such attacks, perseveringly perfected himself in English, and knew well that he was steadily increasing his capital both as a lawyer and as a politician. He derived his knowledge of English mainly from the study of English books, and from the habit of thinking in English. It is said that he translated from the French into English all of Shakespeare and much of Milton, while he has dipped deeply into English poetry and the great English essayists, and has devoted long and laborious study to the choicest specimens of English oratory. He is fond of Burns and of Tennyson. Bright’s speeches he knows as they are known to few English readers. Macaulay’s history and essays are among his favourite studies. He finds an enduring charm in Mr. Goldwin Smith’s simple and exquisite English. Lincoln’s speech at Gettysburg and the second Inaugural he ranks among English classics, and perhaps no other career in history has taken such

¹ “Hansard,” March 16th, 1886, page 180.

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hold upon his heart and imagination as that of the inspired and martyred President. He has read every book that has ever appeared dealing with that strange priest and prophet of the common people; and though of far finer texture than Lincoln, his own life and character reveal something of the patient purpose and silent, strenuous endeavour, which distinguished the American President.

CHAPTER V

IN LAW AND IN JOURNALISM

MR. LAURIER did not easily overcome his vagrant tendency towards journalism and literature. According to Dr. Fréchette, he began to publish, while at Montreal, "a narrative, half tale, half legend, written in clear and vigorous style, and containing a mingling of interesting historical details with sketches of men and manners, which disclosed a most original faculty of observation, together with a rare mastery of our language."¹ This sketch was written in French and appeared in *L'Indépendance Nationale*. As Dr. Fréchette surmises, it was never completed, and the story and the journal in which it was printed are alike forgotten.

Mr. Laurier was now greatly affected by weakness of the lungs, and in order to fight the progress of the disease it was deemed essential that he should leave Montreal. Mr. David in "Mes Contemporains" says, "I seem to see Laurier as he was at that period ; ill, sad, grave, indifferent to all the uproar round about him, he passed in our midst like a shadow." Mr. J. B. E. Dorion, or Eric Dorion, as he was familiarly called, had just died

¹ Taché's "Men of the Day," 2nd series, page 18.

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at *L'Avenir*, and his paper, *Le Défricheur*, was likely to cease publication. Mr. Laurier saw a chance to combine law and journalism, so he formed a partnership with M. Guitte, a printer of St. Hyacinthe, and bought the paper.

The man whom Mr. Laurier succeeded in the publication of *Le Défricheur* was as remarkable in his way as Lanctôt, but had a steadiness of aim and a resolution of purpose which Lanctôt wholly lacked. Eric Dorion's father was a member of the Assembly under the Constitution of 1791. He was the sixth child, and among his brothers were Sir Antoine Dorion and Judge Wilfrid Dorion. The elder sons were educated at Nicolet College, but ill fortune overtook the family, and at fourteen years of age Eric was thrown upon his own resources. In 1843 he started a paper at Three Rivers, but the venture did not succeed, and in 1849 he founded *L'Avenir* in Montreal.

Perhaps no such revolutionary programme has ever been advocated elsewhere in Canada as that championed by *L'Avenir*. It was the organ of the *Rouge* platform adopted in 1848 by a group of young French Radicals, among whom Doutre, Laflamme, Papin, Laberge, and Eric Dorion were conspicuous. They gave at first an uneasy support to Lafontaine, but when Papineau returned from exile, re-entered public life, quarrelled with Lafontaine, attacked the constitutional settlement of 1841, and declared for republican institutions, they

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deserted the more conservative statesman, and accepted Papineau's irresponsible and revolutionary leadership. Their programme covered a great list of political and educational reforms, and demanded repeal of the union and a republican form of government. They were hostile also to a State religion, and some among them even to any form of religion, and they looked to union with the United States as the natural and preferable political destiny of the British American provinces. Papineau himself gave his support to the annexation movement of 1849, and in 1850 voted in Parliament to receive a petition in favour of Canadian independence.

The programme was advocated by Dorion in *L'Avenir* with passionate and reckless enthusiasm, and from time to time between 1848 and 1853, new measures are recommended, and luminous expositions of the various propositions fill its columns. On January 4th, 1850, as manager of *L'Avenir*, he issued an address to the people of Quebec, and the programme seems then to have been well developed. In subsequent issues he deals with its various planks, and it is often republished and strenuously commended to public consideration. In the issue for May 21st, 1851, the programme appears in *L'Avenir* over Dorion's signature, and he points out in the introductory sentences that the year promises to be fruitful in struggle and in vigorous work for the French democracy. The people, he

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says, will soon be called upon to elect their representatives in the Legislative Assembly, and the Democrats will require to use all their energy and all their strength in order that they may be represented by men sincerely devoted to the popular interests, and determined in their soul and conscience to obtain for Canada the social and political reforms of which she is so badly in need. He says that with a view of suggesting to the Democrats a collection of some of the measures which they should urge at the next general election, *L'Avenir* publishes the programme which always has been, and will always continue to be, the programme of that journal. He invites "all the friends of progress to put themselves in frequent communication with the editors on all the questions which might concern the coming elections, and particularly such questions as the candidates of the different political parties, their means of success, and the discussions and results of the meetings held in parish and county; in one word, all that may interest the parties to the cause that we defend."

The programme as it appears in this issue of *L'Avenir*, declares that education should be as widespread as possible; asks for progress in agriculture and for the establishment of model farms; favours colonization of uncultivated lands within reach of the poorer classes; demands free navigation of the St. Lawrence; as free exchange of products as possible; reform of the judicature, decentrali

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zation of the judiciary, and codification of the laws; postal reform, and the free circulation of newspapers: a less expensive administration of government than existed, with reduction of salaries in all the branches of the Civil Service, and a reduction in the number of employees; creation of parish municipalities; decentralization of power; elective institutions in all their fullness; an elective Governor; an elective Legislative Council; an elective magistracy; election of all the heads of public departments; electoral reform based on population; universal suffrage; the summoning and duration of Parliament to be fixed by law; prohibition by special statute of the representatives of the people accepting offices of emolument under the Crown during the exercise of their mandate, and until one year after its expiration; abolition of the seignorial tenure; abolition of the tithe system; abolition of the Protestant Clergy Reserves; abolition of the system of State pensions; abolition of the privileges of lawyers, and freedom for every man to defend his own case; equal rights and equal justice for all citizens; repeal of the union; and finally, and above all, the independence of Canada, and its annexation to the United States. "This," says Dorion, "is what we ask. This is what we will ask always and unceasingly until these improvements and changes, these liberties, have been granted to the Canadian people. Without these liberties, without these reforms and many others, there is no

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salvation for our people. As long as an antiquated and corrupt Government will refuse these, we consider that there should be no inaction and no rest for any friend of this country. And so long as the people have not compelled on the electoral platform the recognition of their undeniable rights, they will always resemble a band of helots, that some men may exploit for their own profit and lead where they please without their knowing why or how." It may be mentioned that upon this platform Dorion unsuccessfully contested Chambly for a seat in Parliament, and that during this year *L'Avenir* ceased publication.

La Minerve, the Conservative and clerical organ, said that the *Rouge* party was formed in hatred of English institutions, of the Constitution which it declared to be vicious, and of responsible government, which it thought to be a farce; that it proclaimed revolutionary ideas in religion and politics, was inspired by a profound hatred of the clergy, and formally avowed the intention of annexing Canada to the United States. Dorion's platform sustains the indictment. The authors of the programme, in fact, adopted many of the opinions of the revolutionary agitators of old France, who had just established the Second Republic on the final ruin of the Bourbons, and some of the chief spokesmen of the group exhibited all the enthusiasm, the extravagance, the effervescent optimism, and reckless irresponsibility of their continental proto-

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types. They contributed, however, to the achievement of many necessary and useful reforms. It is true, as Mrs. Humphry Ward teaches in "*Marcella*," that political extremists improve the old rather than create new conditions. Many of these young *Rouges* sobered and steadied as the years passed, and ripened into moderate and responsible statesmen, while they remained "strenuous to the uttermost of liberty." But for the time they put the Liberal party of Quebec under suspicion of the more conservative elements of the community, they widened the breach between the French and English populations, and they arrayed against the Liberal party the tremendous force of the Roman Catholic Church.

Eric Dorion was one of the founders of the *Institut Canadien* at Montreal and a persistent advocate of popular education. He was active in organizing branches of the *Institut* throughout Quebec, and his fiery zeal and invincible enthusiasm were powerfully enlisted in the desperate struggle with Bishop Bourget. It was in the prosecution of this burning controversy that he was named "*L'Enfant Terrible*," and the term fitted his thin frame and delicate features so admirably that it clung to him as long as he lived. He was as deeply interested in colonization and in farming as in education, and in order to stimulate to better methods of agriculture in Quebec, he founded a model French colony in the Township of Durham. He called the colony

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L'Avenir, either after his paper or as significant of "the future."

It is characteristic of the man that he should have established his colony in the centre of an English population, and should have selected a township called Durham. Many of the more aggressive leaders among the French people resented the tone of Lord Durham's report of 1839, and particularly the statements that Lower Canada must be governed by the English element, and that the only power that could obliterate the nationality of the French Canadians would be that of the numerical majority of a loyal and contented English population. It will be remembered that Lord Durham had described the French Canadians as an old and stationary society in a new and progressive world, and said: "The institutions of France, during the colonization of Canada, were, perhaps, more than those of any other European nation, calculated to repress the intelligence and freedom of the great mass of the people. Those institutions followed the Canadian colonist across the Atlantic. The same central, ill-organized, unimproving, and repressing despotism extended over him. Not merely was he allowed no voice in the government of his province or the choice of his rulers, but he was not even permitted to associate with his neighbours for the regulation of those municipal affairs which the central authority neglected under the pretext of managing. He obtained his land on a tenure singu-

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larly calculated to promote his immediate comfort, and to check his desire to better his condition ; he was placed at once in a life of constant and unvarying labour, of great material comfort and feudal dependence. The ecclesiastical authority to which he had been accustomed established its institutions around him, and the priest continued to exercise over him his ancient influence. No general provision was made for education ; and, as its necessity was not appreciated, the colonist made no attempt to repair the negligence of the Government. It need not surprise us that, under such circumstances, a race of men habituated to the incessant labour of a rude and unskilled agriculture, and habitually fond of social enjoyments, congregated together in rural communities, occupying portions of the wholly unappropriated soil, sufficient to provide each family with material comforts, far beyond their ancient means, or almost their conceptions ; that they made little advance beyond their first progress in comfort, which the bounty of the soil absolutely forced upon them ; that under the same institutions they remained the same uninstructed, inactive, unprogressive people.”¹

Eric Dorion laboured to remove these reproaches, to preserve French Canadian nationality, and to rouse the spirit of emulation and enterprise in the French population. It was in direct pursuance of

¹ “Report and Despatches of the Earl of Durham,” London, 1839, pages 16, 17.

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these objects that he established his French colony in Durham, and undertook to supply a practical example of progressive agriculture in the face of an English community. One of his first performances in the new colony was to build a church with his own hands in order to show that he was opposed, not to the Church as a moral and religious institution, but to its intermeddling in public affairs, and practical patronage of popular ignorance. In 1854 he was elected to Parliament for Drummond and Arthabaska, and was re-elected in 1861, and 1863. In 1862 he founded *Le Défricheur*. The word "défricher" means "to turn up the virgin soil" and "Défricheur" may be translated "settler." It was not so translated, however, by one of the speakers during the Confederation debates. Mr. Denis took the word to mean "clearing" and declared that the paper had never cleared anything except government advertisements when the elder Dorion was Attorney-General for Lower Canada.¹ Eric Dorion opposed Confederation, and his speech in the House is remarkable for a philosophical examination of the position Quebec would occupy as a state of the American Union, and the contention that Confederation must tend to drive Canada into the arms of the Republic.² In *Le Défricheur*, however, he sought mainly to inculcate habits of thrift and

¹ Paul Denis, M.P. for Beauharnois, in the "Confederation Debates," page 879.

² "Confederation Debates," pages 856, 871.

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industry, to establish the dignity of labour, and to awaken the people to the necessity for better educational methods, and the more general diffusion of intelligence. The early fervour of his spirit had passed, and he avoided the semi-religious topics which led to conflicts with the Church and invited clerical interference in political contests. He died in 1866, and *Le Défricheur* passed into the hands of Mr. Laurier.

In the winter of 1866, Mr. Laurier left Montreal to take charge of the paper. He received his first public banquet on the eve of his departure. His plans seem to have been well matured. He had decided to open a law office at Arthabaskaville, and to remove *Le Défricheur* to the seat of the judicial district. The first issue of *Le Défricheur* under the new management appeared on November 28th, 1866, and its publication was continued at L'Avenir, until the first weeks of 1867, when the plant was removed to Arthabaskaville. *Le Pays* of December 11th, 1866, says: "*Le Défricheur* has resumed its regular publication. Mr. Laurier, if we may judge by his programme, while retaining in *Le Défricheur* its spirit, its turn of thought, and occupying himself, as did Dorion, with political economy, agriculture and industrial education, will give to it all the literary care for which Dorion had no time. Mr. Laurier knows well the political history of Canada; he is a sincere and enlightened patriot, distrusting exaggeration and false Liberal-

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ism as much as mere routine; he is studious and subdued; he is an energetic and distinguished writer; his views are broad, his mind upright and loyal; in a word, he is one of the most solid, and at the same time most brilliant young men we know. With all his qualities, and moreover, his legal mind and love of work, Mr. Laurier is in a position to render important services to the Eastern Townships and to the Liberal party while preparing himself for a glorious career."

Le Défricheur, however, was on the verge of collapse when Dorion died, and Mr. Laurier could not command the capital necessary to repair its broken fortunes. The utmost that he could do was to postpone the burial for a season. Besides, the liberal spirit of his writing brought down upon *Le Défricheur* the censure of Bishop Laflèche, of Three Rivers, and many of his clergy; and under the circumstances of the moment he was powerless to wage successful battle against the strong arm of the Church. After a few months of struggle, the effort to maintain the paper was abandoned in April, 1867, and Mr. Laurier was free to devote himself to the practice of his profession. But he had more than his share of ill fortune at this period. Just as *Le Défricheur* succumbed he was stricken with a serious illness, and many weeks passed before he was restored to anything like physical vigour. Even if *Le Défricheur* had lived, Mr. Laurier would probably have found it difficult to maintain an

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active interest in its publication. He could not be expected to settle down to the unromantic drudgery of rural journalism, and absorption in editorial duties could only have diverted attention from his profession. He was finding himself in those days, and the brief experience with *Le Défricheur* was at best but a halt by the wayside. Many a young advocate in other provinces than Quebec has found his first earnings at the bar pitifully inconsequential, and has dreamed of by-paths to fame and fortune. It is unfortunate that the files of *Le Défricheur* were accidentally destroyed by fire many years ago, and it is therefore impossible to quote at length from Mr. Laurier's editorial writings in exposition of the views he then held on social, economic and political questions, and the temper and method of his journalism.

One, however, and it is believed, one only copy of *Le Défricheur* survives. It is the issue of December 27th, 1866, and is addressed to "Chas. Pacaud" in the handwriting of Mr. Laurier. It retains Eric Dorion's motto, "Work ennobles"; to the left the words, "Read! people of the fields," and to the right, "Read the great popular book." In the left-hand upper corner of the first page are the words "Wilfrid Laurier, *Rédacteur*." It will be remembered that Eric Dorion was a determined, even a violent opponent of Confederation, and much of his writing was vehement, passionate and tempestuous. In the issue of December 27th two

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articles deal with the question of union. The spirit of the writing is that of *Le Défricheur* rather than that of Laurier. It is not in keeping with his valedictory at McGill nor with his earlier speeches in the Quebec Legislature. There is no doubt that he was in sympathy with the elder Dorion's campaign against Confederation, and probably believed that the main object of the English advocates of union, outside of Quebec, was to restrict the privileges and curtail the political power of the French population. That was undoubtedly the hope and expectation of George Brown, and John A. Macdonald's preference for a legislative rather than a federal union tended to support the conviction of the French Liberals. Moreover it would be difficult to abandon summarily the policy of Eric Dorion and impose upon *Le Défricheur's* constituency opinions and arguments hostile to all its life and teaching. A public journal, like an individual, develops character and personality, and only by gradual steps can it deny its past and repudiate its own utterances. At least it is true that if Mr. Laurier at twenty-five years of age opposed Confederation on the basis of the Quebec resolutions, he heartily accepted the union when it became an accomplished fact; and no one man in Quebec was more influential in reconciling the dissentient elements in the French Province to acceptance of the settlement and in infusing into his French compatriots the broader spirit of Canadian nationality. But, however that

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may be, the writing in this vagrant copy of *Le Défricheur* has historical interest, and it is necessary to give the evidence as it exists. It is noticeable that in these articles the phrase "the English Colonies" is sometimes italicized, and that throughout there is a lively fear of the effects of Confederation upon the French population. The chief article reads:—

"*Le Journal des Trois Rivières* has put the following question to us:—

"'Will not the union of all the provinces of British North America place them in a better position to escape the dangers of the future than their present isolation?'

"*Le Journal des Trois Rivières* is one of the zealous advocates of Confederation. The manner in which it has put the question shows fully what it thinks, and gives us the secret of its sympathies: if it preaches Confederation, it is for the welfare of the English Colonies in British North America! The welfare of the English Colonies! That is its first thought!

"Let us first say this in justice to *Le Journal des Trois Rivières*, that its ideas are in perfect conformity with those of its masters.

"When the Ministers undertook their Confederation, they had in view only the English Colonies; the basis of all their calculations, of all their hopes, of all their projects, was always the English Colonies.

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“Well, that is not the way we politicians of the Papineau school look at the matter; when any change whatsoever is proposed in our political or social institutions, we do not look to see whether this change will be of use to the English Colonies or to any other neighbour; we think only of Lower Canada and of the French race.

“What have we in common with the *English Colonies*? What interests, what relations bind us to them? Is it a matter of origin? religion, language, national aspirations? No! Not at all!

“We have nothing in common with the *English Colonies*, except that we are all dependent upon the same metropolis.

“That is the reason of the servility of *Le Journal des Trois Rivières* and of the ministry. For what other name can be given to the conduct of him who, in the constitutional changes which are imposed upon his nation, sees only the danger, more or less, or the benefit which is drawn therefrom by those with whom he shares the honour of the colonial yoke?

“*Le Journal des Trois Rivières* and the other advocates of Confederation have forgotten that they were French Canadians in order that they might not lose sight of the fact that they were English colonists.

“Therefore, before examining whether Confederation will place the English Colonies of British North America in a position to escape the dangers

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of the future, we shall examine whether Confederation is of use to Lower Canada and to the French race.

“We do not care a fig for the English Colonies, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland. We have the same relations with them as with Australia; we are colonies of England, that is all. The only difference is the distance, greater or less, which separates us.

“*Le Journal des Trois Rivières* is an advocate of Confederation because it will place the English Colonies of America in a position to escape the dangers of the future; we are the opponents of it because it will be the tomb of the French race and the ruin of Lower Canada.

“Working in Lower Canada, that is to say in its natural sphere, the French race exercises its influence to the whole extent of its strength. When it will be mingled with a race five times larger, whose tendencies are diametrically opposite, either one of two things will happen: either it will follow, like a docile slave, the English and Protestant majority, and before long become English and Protestant as it is, or else it will struggle, a powerless minority, and in place of being swallowed up and drowned peacefully, slowly, with a full knowledge of the situation, it will be reduced to mercy by violence.”

“The project of Confederation binds us hand and foot to the English Colonies. We can do

nothing, absolutely nothing. All important questions are within the sphere of the federal Government, that is to say, the Government of the English Colonies, and all the acts of our little local Parliament can be modified, corrected, cut, enlarged, annulled by the same Government. It has full power over our institutions, our laws, our acts.

“It is not even a Confederation; the federal form attributes to the central Government only the direction of affairs common to all the states; the affairs peculiar to each state are left to its own control, and no one—neither the central Government nor any one else—has the right to intervene. Here everything is quite the contrary; the central Government has the upper hand over everything—remember, over everything. That is a badly disguised legislative union which in a few years will not be even that.

“It would be idle now to discuss the question whether the union of the provinces would place them in a position to escape the dangers of the future, but as we do not wish to be behind in the matter of politeness towards our *confrère*, who has promised us a reply, we are going to approach his question.

“Before formulating this question our *confrère* triumphantly hurled at our head this cry: ‘Union is strength,’ in a tone which meant ‘Answer that if you can.’

“We replied at once and we reply again: Union

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is strength, yes, but only when the elements united are homogeneous. It will be in vain for you to throw together incongruous elements; there will be no strength, there will not even be union.

“The union of Ireland and England has been neither strong nor happy any more than the union of Hungary and of Italy to Austria. If there was any identity whatever between Ireland and England, between Hungary and Italy and Austria, they would have been formidable powers. Far from that, these unions have been weak and deplorable.

“Are the provinces of British North America homogeneous? Let *Le Journal des Trois Rivières* reply.

“What are these dangers which the union of the provinces would place us in a position to escape?

“These dangers can come only from the aggression of the United States. Would Confederation be a match for that powerful colossus? Could our five millions of confederated people cope with the thirty millions of men who make up the American union? That idea is chimerical. We said before in another article, and we repeat it: it is necessary to see things as they are, and to speak as we see; when you will have made Confederation you will be armed with an egg-shell to stop a bullet, you will have placed a wisp of straw in the way of a giant.

“Very far from placing the colonies in a position to escape the dangers of the future, Confederation will create new dangers.

"In this strange union every contrary element will meet face to face; the Catholic element and the Protestant element, the English element and the French element. From this moment there will be strife, division, war, anarchy; the weakest element, that is to say, the French and Catholic element, will be dragged along and swallowed up by the strongest.

"From whatever point of view it is regarded, the project of Confederation is false and full of dangers. There is not one man, not even M. McLeod, editor of *Le Journal des Trois Rivières*, who is not forced to admit that.

"M. McLeod asks us merely for a reply, but we will go farther; we will tell him frankly, bluntly, why he and the thorough-going Conservatives give their support to such a radically bad project: it is not because they believe that *the union of the provinces will put them in a position to escape the dangers of the future*, that is only a miserable pretext; the real reason is hatred of the Liberal party and of Liberal ideas.

"When in 1864 the Conservative party lost power, the Liberal party was going to take possession for a long time. The Conservative ministry suddenly turned around and allied itself with Mr. Brown and the *Clear Grits*, who demanded Confederation as the price of this alliance. The sacrifice of principles cost M. Cartier little; the former (Mr. Brown) placed in his hands a portfolio which was

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ardently sought; he did not hesitate; a large number of his political followers left him from that time, but an equally large number—among them M. McLeod—accepted the new alliance of their master and the policy which followed. This alliance, this policy, they detested from the bottom of their heart, but it was the only means of throwing into opposition the Liberal party and Liberal ideas.

“You have succeeded, gentlemen; you have obtained a temporary triumph; but you have killed nationality!”

The second article is headed, “A new project of Confederation,” and reads: “The following despatch was received from London last week: ‘The delegates from the English provinces of North America have agreed upon the basis of a project of Confederation. The project will be submitted for the sanction of Parliament as soon as it is drawn up.’ According to this despatch, we may expect to see nothing less than a new project for Confederation substituted for the old one. What can be the reason for this modification? The delegates from the provinces are the same men who drew up the project with which we are acquainted; the idea of changing it, therefore, cannot come from them. This alteration must then have been demanded by the Government of the Metropolis. Will the people at last understand that the Canadian ministry are the valets and slaves of the Colonial Office?”

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There is a third article well worth quoting. Charles Pacaud, of Stanfold, had quarrelled with his clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Duhaut, and had refused to pay the tithe which all Catholics in Quebec are obliged to pay their curés. The tithe, or as it is called in French, *le livre*, is nominally one-tenth of all the grains harvested. In practice, however, this amount is never levied. The tax is really one twenty-sixth. Pacaud refused to pay this tithe for various reasons. He contended that the clergyman in question was not a curé or rector but only a missionary, and that only a curé or rector permanently appointed was entitled to the tithe. He claimed that the property on which it was sought to collect was only recently cultivated, and did not yield sufficient return to pay the labourers employed thereon. There were also various other allegations, and finally the contention that the clergyman did not acknowledge the supremacy of the Queen. The chief objections urged, however, were the title of Rev. Mr. Duhaut to the position and to the tithe. At the Court of Review in Quebec, Judge Stewart maintained the plea of Pacaud that the clergyman was not entitled to the tithe inasmuch as he was a missionary and not a permanent curé. But Chief Justice Meredith and Judge Taschereau held, as *Le Défricheur* says, "that the curé was entitled to the tithe from the simple reason that he occupied the parsonage." The amount involved was not more than twenty dollars. It was the principle which was

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at stake. Pacaud was condemned by the Court to pay the tithe for the past, and the only way in which he could escape the obligation for the future was formally to renounce the Catholic religion. This he did; and until his death in 1895 he was a Protestant, and his family are still Protestants. The case excited extraordinary interest in Quebec. Pacaud was a wealthy merchant and money-lender at Stanfold. His wife was a sister of Judge Mondelet, who gave the first judgment for Madame Guibord and the *Institut Canadien* against the cure and fabrique of Notre Dame at Montreal, and one of the most independent and fearless judges that have ever sat on the bench in Quebec. Under the heading, "Insulter," the surviving copy of *Le Défricheur* thus deals with the judgment pronounced against Mr. Pacaud, and with the comments of a contemporary journal:—

"*Le Journal des Trois Rivières* reports a case of Duhaut against Pacaud in which the Court of Revision at Quebec decided that 'the tithe is due to the curé from the simple fact that he is in possession of his parsonage.'

"We do not know the facts of the case, but from the little knowledge we have of the matter, and independently of the high authority of Judges Meredith, Stewart and Taschereau, we believe their decision perfectly conforms to the principles of the old French jurisprudence.

"That, however, is no reason for insulting Mr.

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Pacaud, the condemned party, as does *Le Journal des Trois Rivières*.

“If Mr. Pacaud maintained the contrary of the thesis sanctioned by the judgment, he certainly had a plausible cause, and there was nothing in it but a pure question of law. Every party who prosecutes before a court a litigious claim, whether well founded or not, provided that it be plausible, exercises a legitimate right, and to make it a reproach to him that the court did not see as he did is foolishness, if not bad faith.

“But it is not enough for *Le Journal des Trois Rivières* to insult the living; it attacks the dead; it rummages the tomb. After its tirade against Mr. Pacaud it exclaims: “Ah! if the late *Défricheur* still lived you would hear it cry, ‘Pay! Baptiste, Pay!’

“Notice all the scarcely veiled hatred against Mr. Dorion which pierces through this paraphrase! Do you not see glee, barely hidden, that the ‘late *Défricheur*’ has ceased to exist? Let *Le Journal des Trois Rivières* understand well if the ‘late *Défricheur*’ still lived it would not say ‘Pay! Baptiste, Pay!’

“Mr. Dorion attacked vicious institutions, waste, squandering; he denounced these things to the people, but he never discussed the application of the existing law.

“This malevolent insinuation hurled at Mr. Dorion when he was alive, would have been only

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one more calumny added to those of which he was the victim ; to-day it is simply cowardice.

“There were insulters of tombs before *Le Journal des Trois Rivières*, but they displayed their hatred openly. To follow to the tomb the memory of a man by malevolent insinuations and half formulated accusations is a depth of meanness hitherto unknown.”¹

Outside of Quebec or Montreal, Mr. Laurier could not have selected a better centre for the practice of his profession than Arthabaskaville; while it was fortunate for the man and fortunate for Canada that he was to pass so many years of his life among a mixed French and English population. He was in daily contact with one of the crucial problems of government in Canada, and the conditions were altogether favourable to a sane and tolerant study of the sympathies, the prejudices, and all the social and political ideals of both French and English. Twenty-five or thirty years ago Arthabaskaville was a straggling village of a few score houses, a few primitive industries, a parish church, and a Catholic college, set in a valley and surrounded by a wide sweep of farming country. And Arthabaskaville has slept on down the years, and is to-day very much what it was a generation ago. The Judicial District of Arthabaska covers the counties of Drummond, Arthabaska and Megantic.

¹ The copy of *Le Défricheur* from which these quotations are taken was obtained from Mr. Charles A. Gauvreau, M.P. for Temiscouata.

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The seat of the Superior Court is at Arthabaskaville, and there are circuit courts at Drummondville, in the County of Drummond, and at Inverness, in the County of Megantic. The population of Drummond comprises French, English, Irish, Scotch, and American elements, while that of Megantic is chiefly French and Scotch, and especially Scotch in the townships of Leeds and Inverness. Mr. Laurier soon acquired an exceptional popularity in this community, and rose steadily to a position of leadership in its public concerns. His French neighbours took a vast pride in his gifts and attainments, and he soon won an abiding place in the esteem and confidence of the English-speaking people, and particularly of the Scotch element. The severe candour, the shrewd, keen wit, the simple direct logic of the Scotch mind, have always fascinated Mr. Laurier. He said once that if he were not French he would choose to be—Scotch.¹ A pregnant pause just before he pronounced the last word gave a peculiar relish to the jest and a flavour of Scotch shrewdness to the observation. He was speaking at Toronto, and the natural thought of his audience was that he was feeling for the native sympathies and proper racial self-esteem of the English-speaking people of Ontario. But he gave a deft turn to the sentence, and one saw behind the speaker that great host of Scotsmen

¹ Speech at the Banquet of the Toronto Board of Trade, January 5th, 1893.



LAUBIER'S HOME, ARTHABASKAVILLE

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in Canada who constitute such a powerful element in the voting strength of the Liberal party. Nothing was further from his thought than to use a social occasion for a party purpose, or to estimate cheaply the good qualities of English or Irish. He knew that the ingratiating word would be understood, but his audience could not know so well that behind the chaffing humour of the moment was a downright sincerity. Mr. Laurier's liking for the Scotch is the growth of years and the fact of a life-time. It is the product of his home life with the Murrays of New Glasgow and his long social and business intercourse with the Scotch settlements of Drummond and Megantic.

For some years Mr. Laurier practiced his profession with zeal and distinction. He was fond of the work of circuit, and was successful in the conduct of many important cases. He was tenacious in argument, aggressive in defence, and fair and moderate in prosecution. He advised with caution, he had no greed for fees, and was never a maker of litigation. Naturally, office work to a man of his genius and temperament was drudgery, and he probably turned sometimes with pathetic weariness from the petty details of business. It is not true that Mr. Laurier ever lacked industry, but he sometimes lacked interest in questions that were not of pith, size and consequence. His heart was in the thrust and parry, the heat and vigour of debate in open court; and no one who has cared to learn

of his life and work in the court-rooms and on the hustings of Quebec will understand just how he acquired his early reputation in the other provinces for excessive amiability and lack of aggressive qualities. Courtesy is not weakness. A man is not necessarily strong and aggressive simply because he is ill-mannered. Mr. Laurier could always set himself to a great task with high courage and unflagging enthusiasm, and has probably always had to flog himself into adequate interest in the smaller concerns from which no poor man in this practical world can escape. During these years he was poor in purse and frail in health, and with all his splendid dowry of intellect and personality he had to know both labour and sacrifice before he got free of debt and thoroughly established in his profession.

Two years after Mr. Laurier settled at Arthabaskaville, on May 13th, 1868, he married Miss Zoë Lafontaine, of Montreal, and, if we except the good gift of children, all of blessedness that marriage yields has been realized from this union. Madame Laurier is as admirable and efficient as the wife of the Prime Minister as she was as the helpmeet of the struggling barrister of Arthabaskaville. With something of her great husband's philosophic disposition, with good sense, good taste, and excellent social tact, she has been equal to the onerous social duties and responsibilities which have increased with every onward step in his successful and influential career. We dwell with unction upon

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the labours and sacrifices which fall upon men who devote their lives to the public service, but seem to have little thought for the burdens which fall upon the wives of politicians. It is the fact, however, that the wife of a party leader bears a load only less heavy than that her husband must carry, and can know few of the consolations of the statesman who finds his recompense in useful and honourable public service. Official life means for women an intolerable social strain, and often an intolerable domestic isolation, and it is not surprising that the influence of so many women is exerted to turn their husbands from public pursuits.

Mr. Laurier's marriage set fresh spurs to his ambition, and insured that solicitous care for his health which was essential to his restoration to full physical vigour. His popularity and his fame were steadily increasing. He was trusted alike by French and English, and politically was no doubt stronger with the English-speaking electors than with his French compatriots. Cartier was at the zenith of his power in Quebec. There was a sullen and enduring quarrel between the Reform party and the Catholic Church. The influence of the clergy with the French population was formidable. Mr. Laurier was neither a courtier nor a sycophant, and could enter Parliament only as an outspoken and independent Liberal, bound by no pledge other than that of reasonable loyalty to the Reform party, and recognizing no duty in public life except

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to serve the State and promote the common welfare. At any rate, all surrounding influences, and probably his own inclination, were driving him on towards public life, and the question of his entrance into the Legislature now rested upon his own decision and upon the call for an election.

CHAPTER VI

IN TWO PARLIAMENTS

MR. LAURIER had not long to wait for the opportunity to enter Parliament. The first Legislature of Québec after Confederation was dissolved on May 27th, 1871, and in June and July of that year a new house was elected. Mr. Laurier was the Liberal candidate for the electoral division of Arthabaska, and was opposed by Mr. Edward John Hemming, who had held the seat during the first Parliament. Mr. Hemming was a barrister and practiced at Drummondville. He was English and of some talent, but was not remarkable for sound political judgment. *Le Nouveau Monde*, of Montreal, a clerical organ, founded to combat Liberal tendencies and to promote the Catholic programme, took notice of the contest in Arthabaska, and said in one of its issues: "Mr. Hemming has rendered great services to the county by his devotion to the Sorel and Drummondville road. Unfortunately he has not always shown himself just and impartial to the French Canadians and Catholics. Mr. Laurier is personally esteemed, but his advanced Liberal theories will prevent Catholics from giving him the cordial support which a Conservative would have received. It is regrettable that a more acceptable

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candidate is not in the field." The general result of the election was to maintain the Conservative administration in office, but Mr. Laurier carried Arthabaska by a majority of 1,000. His was one of the notable achievements of the contest, and it is not surprising that when he went down to the meeting of Parliament at Quebec, he was heartily welcomed by his Liberal colleagues, and excited the very special interest of his political opponents. His signal electoral triumph had carried his name all over the province, and the fact that a new and striking figure had appeared in public life was widely recognized.

But he had still to meet that crucial test which checks the progress and breaks the heart of many a politician. Mr. Laurier had proved that he could impress a judge, move a jury, or sway a public meeting. These, however, were not conclusive evidences that he had the manner and the method of the successful parliamentary debater. The most effective platform speakers are often unsuccessful in Parliament. The best parliamentary debaters often fail on the platform. Life hardly holds a more poignant humiliation than that which comes to the orator with a great popular reputation, when he finds that he is impotent and ineffective on the floor of Parliament, and recognizes that he cannot adapt himself to the new conditions. No man of his generation in Canada excelled Mr. Chapleau in the arts and graces of popular oratory. His mag-

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netic presence, fiery eloquence, flashing eye, and sweeping gesture, had a tremendous power over Quebec audiences, and he was hardly less effective when he appeared at great public meetings in the English provinces. But as a rule he could not move the House of Commons. For that audience the performance was too shrill and strenuous, and he suffered in comparison with inferior men who had no platform reputation to maintain. Mr. Laurier was but thirty years of age when he took his seat in the Quebec Legislature, and, of course, had then no platform reputation such as Mr. Chapleau enjoyed when he entered the House of Commons. But he had achieved distinct success as a public speaker, and he must now repeat that success in Parliament if he was to hold the ground he had won, and justify his electoral triumph.

The Legislature met on November 7th, and three days later Mr. Laurier rose to speak on the Address. It will be remembered that the system of dual representation still prevailed, and that many of the men who were conspicuous figures in the old parliaments of united Canada and some who had high rank in the new Federal Legislature had seats in the Assembly. Among these were George E. Cartier, Luther H. Holton, George Irvine, Joseph E. Cauchon, Theodore Robitaille, H. G. Joly, Telesphore Fournier, Joseph G. Blanchet, and Hector L. Langevin. Such a House could have no mean debating standard, and only a speech

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with body, spirit, and finish, could make an impression in such surroundings. Contemporary writers agree that Mr. Laurier scored an unequivocal success. No doubt the bearing and manner of the young orator were material factors in this initial parliamentary triumph. No speech that Mr. Laurier has ever made reads quite as well as it was spoken. The rich, musical voice, the erect form and classic face, the simplicity and candour which are the outstanding characteristics of the man, cannot be transferred to paper, and without these the speeches of Wilfrid Laurier are mere shadows of the actual performance. This speech, as it has come down to us, has some of the noteworthy characteristics, but, of course, does not take rank with the best of his later deliverances. It has, however, no hint of the petty quarrels of the hustings. It has none of the flavour of the scrap-book. There was no threshing of dead straw in order to prove the fibre of the speaker's partisanship, and establish his devotion to inherited party feuds. It is, in fact, not an echo, but an original utterance, and unquestionably reveals independent thinking and maturity of judgment.

It is true he does strike one sadly familiar note. The Speech from the Throne, in dutiful fulfillment of the ordained function of such speeches, declared that the Province was exceptionally prosperous, and in reply Mr. Laurier remarked that Tantalus was rich, but in sight of abundance was eternally

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starving. Optimism goes with the offices in Canada, and pessimism with divorce from place and patronage. But there was sound reason for Mr. Laurier's lament over the slow settlement of the vacant lands, and the laggard development of the natural resources of the country. There was sagacity and penetration also in his recognition of the industrial qualities of the people of Lower Canada, and he was probably not far wrong in his contention that they could manufacture twenty-five per cent. more cheaply in Quebec than in any other part of the American continent. His idea of an industrial immigration was probably derived from the old *Rouge* programme. He argued that it was possible to check the exodus to the United States by introducing into Quebec the master mechanics and small capitalists of the cities of Europe, the master miners of Wales and the north of England, the mechanics of Alsace, the Flemish weavers, and the German artisans. There is one sentence in the speech which has often been quoted as evidence that he had an early leaning towards the theory of protection. "It is," he said, "a humiliating confession to make, that after three centuries of existence this country is still unable to supply its own wants, and that it is still obliged to have recourse to foreign markets, though nature has lavished upon it all the gifts necessary to make it a manufacturing country." He said again, "It is a duty, especially for us Canadians of French origin, to

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create a national industry. We are surrounded by a strong and vigorous race, who are endowed with a devouring activity and have taken possession of the entire universe as their field of labour." He confessed that he was pained to see his own people eternally excelled by their fellow-countrymen of British origin, and he insisted that this was due to purely political reasons. He pointed out that after the cession the French Canadians, in order to maintain their national inheritance intact, fell back upon themselves and held no relations with the outside world, and that the result was "to keep them strangers to the reforms which were constantly taking place beyond their boundaries, and to fatally shut them up within the narrow circle of their old theories." On the other hand, much of the new blood that was poured into the colony came from the great British centres of trade and industry, and this progressive element was ceaselessly renewed by a constant current of immigration equipped with fresh information and furnished with new ideas. "We need, therefore," he said, "have no shame in admitting that we were beaten by such men and under such circumstances." Then he spoke the message which has always been upon his lips, which breathes the spirit that has animated all his public life, and reveals the catholicity of his patriotism, and the depth of his devotion to the ideal of a united Canada. The times had changed, he proceeded, and the hour had struck for French

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Canadians to enter the lists with their English-speaking fellows. "Our respective forefathers were enemies, and waged bloody war against each other for centuries. But we, their descendants, united under the same flag, fight no other fights but those of a generous emulation to excel each other in trade and industry, in the sciences and the arts of peace." This was a good rock on which to rest a career, and to this ideal he has been true in all his later teaching.

That he then inclined to protectionism cannot be doubted. Others of his earlier speeches contain very direct declarations in favour of temporary protection for the undeveloped industries of a new country. For the moment, however, his aim was not so much to declare a preference for any particular economic policy, as to awaken in the French Canadian people an appreciation of their own admirable industrial qualities, and to lure Quebec into a more active participation in the industrial and commercial life of the country. This appears still more clearly in the closing sentences of his address. It seems that when Mr. Pierre Chauveau took the office of Premier in 1867, he had been for twelve years Superintendent of Education in Quebec, and had just returned from Europe, where he had gone to study the various educational systems of the old world. Mr. Laurier found fault because he had not embodied in legislation the results of his observations and experience, and emphasized the grave

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necessity for a reform of the existing system of education. Here he was upon delicate ground, but he knew the word which needed to be said, and his utterance is distinct, straightforward, and unequivocal. "In a free state," he said, "everything is connected and linked together, legislation, trade, industry, arts, sciences and letters. All are members of the same body, the body social. When one of the members suffers, the entire body is affected; when there is an abuse anywhere, the entire body social is more or less paralyzed; when there is anywhere something left undone which should be done, the normal order is thereby disturbed." He buttressed this position by a sympathetic eulogy of the reforming zeal of British statesmen, and counselled Ministers to show equal determination in overthrowing abuses, and the same high fidelity to the cause of the people.

It may be that this was not a great speech, but it will probably bear comparison with any speech that has been made by a man of his years in a Canadian Parliament. It exhibits at least three features that are conspicuous in many of his later addresses: (1) The appeal to British ideals in statesmanship, and the assertion of the unequalled freedom and efficiency of British institutions; (2) the apt classical allusion, the flavour of literature, the glimpse of the wisdom of the books and the authority of the past; (3) the eager plea for unity and coöperation among all elements of the Canadian

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people, and the solemn prayer for a final truce to ancient quarrels and inherited prejudices.

As has been said, the speech was well received. It was received with enthusiasm by his party associates, and with respect by his political opponents. In this particular the French Canadians are more generous than we more phlegmatic and self-contained English people. It is a common observation at Ottawa that the social relations of the French members are substantially unaffected by political differences; and surely if our party contests are fairly waged and there is integrity in our public life, that is the saner and the better fashion. It was recognized from this moment that Mr. Laurier must become a force in the public life of the country, and that in his own province he had no serious rival among the younger men in the Liberal party. Holton and Dorion were still in harness, but death was soon to strike the one, and the other was shortly to pass to the Bench for which he had such natural and such eminent qualifications. Keen-eyed students of men and affairs saw in Mr. Laurier one who seemed to combine the fine and strong qualities of both these veterans, and marvelled at his surefootedness and remarkable equipment for public service. He was, however, not an exceptionally active member of the Legislature, and only two or three of his important speeches have been preserved. In fact, he has never been a frequent speaker, even in the House of Commons. Until his

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assumption of the Liberal leadership, he was rarely heard, except when great questions were in issue, or local interests demanded his attention. His heart was in the fine old library, rather than in the heated party quarrels which too often disturbed the serenity of the Legislative Chamber, and, except when he felt the real pressure of public duty, he was careless whether or not his name figured in Hansard.

Just two weeks after he had spoken on the Address, the question of dual representation arose in the Legislature, and he made a speech which reveals a close study of the Canadian Constitution, and a thorough grasp of the essential features of the federal system. He argued that dual representation was not compatible with the federal principle, and must be fatal to the freedom and independence of the Legislatures. The sphere of the Legislature was the protection and conservation of local interests, and that of the federal Parliament the conservation and protection of general interests. The representative who was allowed to sit in both Houses must have divided duties and conflicting interests, and the inevitable tendency must be for the local body to sink into a position of subordination to the central Parliament. This was sound reasoning, and the position is amply supported by subsequent developments in our political history. A few years later the argument prevailed both in Quebec and in Ontario, and it is long since any one has thought that our Constitution would be a workable political

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instrument if federal ministers or members could sit in the local parliaments, or local members proceed from the consideration of provincial interests in the Legislatures to the consideration of questions which know no provincial boundaries, and which could not be profitably involved in the exigencies of local politics. We owe to the free action of the local parliaments the final interpretation of the Constitution in the spirit of its founders, and the ultimate triumph of the federal principle, for which the Liberal leaders contended at Confederation. This speech, much more clearly than the speech on the Address, revealed the young member for Arthabaska as an earnest student of constitutional questions, a keen and sagacious observer of political tendencies and conditions, and an accomplished master of the art of debate.¹

Le Pays discussed the speech with positive enthusiasm. The Montreal *Herald*, the chief Liberal paper of Quebec, said: "Mr. Laurier, the young and talented member for Arthabaska, made the speech of the evening. It was remarkable for lucidity and power of argument. Many gentlemen accustomed to parliamentary debates, pronounced it the ablest address given this session. His French is remarkably pure, and gives evidence of the highest culture and education." *Le Nouveau Monde* again took occasion

¹ Mr. Laurier's speech on the Address in the Quebec Legislature, and also that on Dual Representation will be found in the collection of his speeches, published at Quebec in 1890, and edited by Mr. Ulric Barthe.

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to combat his Liberal opinions, but freely recognized the strength, grace, and finish of the speech, and the distinct impression made upon the House. Two orators, said *Le Nouveau Monde*, shared the attention of the Chamber,—Irvine and Laurier. It added: “Mr. Laurier speaks with an elegance and purity of style unknown in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Chauveau alone can dispute the palm with him in this respect. His voice, sonorous and supple, knows every variety of inflexion. In debate he is calm, and goes back to first principles. Unfortunately, his studies have lain along Liberal, not to say Socialist, lines. In his speech he brought out the theory of Rousseau on the social contract. To hear him, society is nothing else than the result of a contract by which each of its members divests himself of his rights. Now this theory is false from every point of view, and cannot be admitted in Christian society. It is from that theory that every revolution has sprung. Rousseau wished that members of society could never resume the rights they gave up. But his disciples replied, rightly enough, that one generation could engage only itself, and that the contract could be kept only so long as the majority consented. From the point of view of the social contract, this argument is irresistible. When armed with this principle, men sapped the bases of society, or overthrew every government in succession, until at last it could be said that Europe, and particularly France, became ungovernable. On

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studying the Christian theory closer, and comparing it with that he appears to embrace, Mr. Laurier will see that the first is infinitely superior to the second in every respect. But we have wandered far from the double mandate." *Le Nouveau Monde*, in truth, would wander far from any mandate in order to attack the Liberal party of Quebec, and the principles of government which Mr. Laurier represented. It is interesting to remember that the resolution against dual representation, for which Mr. Laurier spoke so long ago, was introduced by Mr. F. G. Marchand, who represented the fine old Liberal county of St. Johns in the Quebec Legislature for an unbroken term of more than thirty years, and has left a memory of private virtue, and a record of public service as pure and as blameless as any that Canadians are permitted to cherish.

But it was not in the Quebec Legislature that Mr. Laurier was to find his sphere of service. The Liberal leaders were not slow to perceive that his natural field was in federal affairs, and he was easily persuaded to seek election to the federal Parliament. He therefore resigned his seat in the Legislature, and at the general election of 1874, as stormy a time as our politics have known, he stood for the Commons for Drummond and Arthabaska, and was returned with 238 of a majority. He took his seat in the first Liberal Parliament returned after Confederation, and the only Liberal Parliament which Canada knew until he himself led the

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Liberal party to victory nearly a quarter of a century afterwards. His desk mate was Dr. Louis Fréchette, and though that brilliant scholar and writer soon wearied of the stress and strain of party warfare and returned to his books, there was then formed between the two a friendship as close as it has proved to be enduring. Dr. Fréchette thus describes Mr. Laurier's introduction to the House of Commons: "As the resounding triumph of his début in the Legislative Assembly of Quebec had placed him in the highest rank among the most brilliant French orators of his own province, so that which marked his entry into the House of Commons, in 1874, carried him at one bound to the distinction of being almost without a peer among the English-speaking debaters of the Dominion."¹ There is, perhaps, a touch of extravagance in this burning eulogy, but it is quite true that he spoke with extraordinary acceptance, and from the outset was greatly liked and profoundly respected by the House of Commons.

His first speech was made in French as seconder of the address in reply to the speech with which Lord Dufferin opened Parliament on March 30th, 1874. It was not until the next session that *Hansard* was established, and the press reports of Mr. Laurier's speech are imperfect and inadequate. The mover of the address on that occasion was Mr. Thomas Moss, who represented West Toronto for

¹ Taché's "Men of the Day," second series, page 21.

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three sessions and then resigned his seat in order to accept a judgeship. Mr. Moss was a man of brilliant attainments, whose untimely death was a grievous loss to the Canadian judiciary. The pride which the Liberals of Ontario took in Mr. Moss was probably quite equal to that which the Liberals of Quebec had in Mr. Laurier. It is seldom indeed that two such interesting figures have been found among the new members of a Canadian Parliament, and rarely, if ever, has the task to which they were assigned been so well performed. Three years later the one was a Minister of the Crown, and the other Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal for Ontario.

Mr. Laurier said that under our Constitution we had freedom, privilege, and the power of a great nation, combined with the advantages of connection with the British Empire. He did not believe the Constitution could be replaced by another as good. Some of them had been opposed to Confederation years ago because they doubted if the scheme of union was practicable. But the moment they were defeated in 1867 they set to work to make Confederation a success. The French Canadian Liberal party were not like the Liberals of France or other nations of the continent of Europe, who were at any time ready, by violence, to overturn existing Governments. They resembled rather the Liberals of England, who for so many years worked and voted for reform, and by constitutional

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means achieved the grand results which they saw to-day. From the moment the opponents of Confederation in Canada were defeated they bowed to the decision, and frankly and earnestly endeavoured to advance the interests of the new Dominion. Their programme was based upon the principle of respect for authority and full acceptance of the obligation to labour for the general good of the country. Our Constitution was founded upon the British Constitution, and that was the finest under which men ever lived. It secured to every man his liberty, and enabled him to exercise his constitutional rights without fear and under the protection of authority. There was nothing on this continent to equal that great Constitution. It was particularly fitted to unite citizens of different races, nationalities, and religions, and in these respects even the Constitution of the United States had been less successful. There was not a man in Canada who did not support the union, and the process of welding into one the different provinces had been so successful that they were all proud to be Canadians, while equally proud to be subjects of the British Empire. If to-day there was a man among them who would seek or desire to sever the union, he deserved no place in the community, and was unworthy of the privileges and advantages of British citizenship. He affirmed, he said, without fear of contradiction, that we presented a spectacle of civil and religious liberty not surpassed in the

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world, and we had none of those questions to trouble us which excited the passions of people, and disorganized society in European nations.¹

According to the *Toronto Mail's* report, Mr. Laurier declared that he "gloried with Mr. Moss in the connection of this Dominion with the Empire. The Liberals of Quebec were not of the same school as the Radicals of France, but of the Liberal school of England, who desired to accomplish reforms in a constitutional manner. They did not wish to effect a change which had not the sanction of the majority. It was in such a way that the British Constitution had been framed and handed down to us in all its perfection after the wisdom of centuries had been employed in the great work." *The Mail* adds that he concluded "with a brilliant peroration." This was spoken twenty-seven years ago, but it is in spirit and in letter exactly what Mr. Laurier has said all down the years, and it would be hard indeed to overestimate the services which this eloquent French Canadian has thus rendered to the cause of Canadian unity, and to the integrity and solidarity of British institutions on this continent.

Mr. Laurier also discussed the questions raised in the Speech from the Throne, and we shall find in his other observations some declarations of policy to which he has tenaciously adhered, and glimpses of that courageous programme of development

¹ Reports of the *Toronto Globe* and *Montreal Herald*.

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which is the characteristic feature of his Administration. He rejoiced that it was proposed to improve our commercial facilities, and to increase our industrial resources, and that among the measures promised, those relating to commercial development were so prominent and so important. He argued that the desire of the Liberal Government to have a railway constructed to the Pacific was quite as strong as that of their predecessors, but that commercial rather than political reasons should determine the route, and measure the scale of expenditure. He was glad, too, that the Government had promised the enlargement of our harbours and canals, and these he described as the real source of the greatness to which Canada was destined. This question, he said, had been before the country for years, but the work had never been vigorously prosecuted, and he contended that in determining our policy we should look not simply to the next few years but to "the great future." He passed on to the question of reciprocity, and spoke strongly for better trade relations with the United States. He hoped that the Commissioners then at Washington would succeed in negotiating a treaty, and argued that Canadians generally favoured reciprocal trade relations with the Republic. This no one then disputed. At that time the leaders of both the great political parties in Canada would have heartily accepted the widest measure of reciprocity with the United States, so long as discrimination against

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Great Britain was not involved ; nor would anyone have discovered that treason was practised or the British Empire endangered by the consummation of such a natural and beneficial arrangement. Political exigencies did not yet require new tests of loyalty and new statutes of treason. He spoke also for amendment of the election laws, for simultaneous polling, and for the creation of a Supreme Court for the determination of legal and constitutional questions which had still to be submitted for consideration to the law officers of the Crown in England.¹

The speech was undoubtedly successful, or at least as successful as a French speech can be in the House of Commons. But no man who speaks only in French can make a reputation in the Canadian Parliament, largely influence the deliberations of that assembly, or appreciably determine the course of events in the country. If Mr. Laurier's speech on this occasion had been made in English, it would have excited general attention throughout the English-speaking provinces, and have set him at once in the front rank of the debaters of the Commons. At it was, the speech was almost unnoticed outside of Quebec, and his eloquent interpretation of the attitude of French Canadian Liberals towards the Confederation and the Empire was imperfectly heard and imperfectly understood.

The Globe's parliamentary correspondent had

¹ Reports of the *Toronto Globe* and *Montreal Herald*.

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this reference to the speech: "Mr. Laurier, the seconder, spoke in French, a circumstance that deprived many members of the pleasure of fully understanding a speech that those who could enjoy it declared to be of the highest order. Mr. Laurier's appearance is youthful, but he is already well known as an eloquent public speaker, and he addressed the House with the quiet but earnest manner of a practised debater. He, like the mover of the Address, was warmly cheered by both Ministerialists and Opposition members when he sat down." On the following day *The Globe* made editorial reference to the speech as follows: "Mr. Laurier, who spoke in French, must, judging from the translation which appeared in our columns, have worthily followed Mr. Moss, nor was it any wonder that the compliments of the Prime Minister and of Sir John Macdonald should have been struck in another than the formal key adopted on such occasions." A writer in *La Minerve*, the French Conservative organ of Montreal, describing the new Parliament, and more particularly the younger French members from Quebec, said: "Since the name of Mr. Laurier has fallen under my pen, I must say, at the risk of causing him to shudder, that his speech, so eloquent, so conservative, has not placed him in the odour of sanctity with his leaders. His profession of political faith, his confidence in our new institutions, must sound strange in the ears of Dorion, who proclaimed in the House that Confederation was a

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failure. If I did not know the independence of character of Mr. Laurier, I would recommend him to the good cares of Geoffrion and Paquet." The *Montreal Gazette*, also Conservative, in its parliamentary notes remarked: "Mr. Laurier gave his friends, the *Rouges*, a rather hard hit by declaring that he was of the Liberal party which was based on the model of the constitutional Liberals of England and not those of France."

Sir John Macdonald, as Leader of the Conservative Opposition, spoke immediately after Mr. Laurier, and warmly complimented the mover and seconder of the Address on the speeches they had just delivered. Mr. Laurier, he said, had "fully justified the reputation which he had brought with him." He added that "he did not wish to confine his approbation to the manner of the honourable gentlemen, but must compliment them mostly on their matter. He agreed with the seconder when he said that socially and politically the Liberals of Canada were not like those of France but those of England, who had raised the people without a revolution to their present high position." This reference of Sir John Macdonald to the likeness of the Liberals of Canada to those of Great Britain was heartily cheered, as was Mr. Laurier's eloquent assertion of the devotion of Canadian Liberals to the methods and ideals of the great leaders of British Liberalism. It but remains to add the tribute of the Prime Minister to Mr. Moss and Mr.

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Laurier. Mr. Mackenzie heartily congratulated both members, and declared that during the time he had sat in Parliament and listened to similar speeches he did not recollect an occasion when he had heard the gentlemen acquit themselves so well as they had upon this occasion. Although both gentlemen sat as a matter of course upon the ministerial side of the House—at least so far as the ministerial benches could hold them—everyone, he was sure, would be pleased to welcome such an addition to the debating power of the House. This in brief is the story of Mr. Laurier's first appearance in the Parliament of Canada, and these the favourable circumstances under which he first stood out in full view of the Canadian people.

CHAPTER VII

THE RED RIVER TROUBLES

THE Confederation was yet in its infancy when the negotiations with the Imperial Government and the Hudson's Bay Company for the acquisition of the Western Territories were completed. For many years some of the bolder political and commercial spirits of older Canada had agitated for the abrogation of the great Company's sovereignty over the West, and for the assertion of Canadian authority from the Lake of the Woods to the Pacific. Speaking in the House of Commons in 1875, Sir John Macdonald, according to the rather imperfect Hansard of that period, said: "From the first time he had entered Parliament, the people of Canada looked forward to a western extension of territory, and from the time he was first a Minister in 1854, the question was brought up time and again and pressed with great ability and force by the Hon. George Brown, who was then a prominent man in opposition to the Government."¹ The impulse towards the westward march of empire came mainly from Upper Canada. Quebec, outside the commercial interests of Montreal, was hostile or indifferent, and the Eastern Provinces shrank from the

¹ Hansard, 1875, page 67.

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great obligations involved in the assumption of sovereignty over the Western Territories. During the negotiations for Confederation, the advocates of territorial extension to the westward found it necessary to practise reticence and discretion. As soon, however, as the union was accomplished, the Hon. William Macdougall, who had been trained under the hand of George Brown, pressed the question upon the Cabinet and upon Parliament, and on December 4th, 1867, introduced resolutions declaring that it would promote the prosperity of the Canadian people and conduce to the advantage of the Empire if the Dominion of Canada were extended westward to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and authorizing the Government to negotiate with the Imperial authorities for the union of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory with the Dominion, and for recognition of the authority of the Canadian Parliament to legislate for their future welfare and good government. In 1868, in virtue of these resolutions, Cartier and Macdougall proceeded to London to arrange with the Home Government the terms of settlement with the Hudson's Bay Company, and the basis of transfer to Canada.

While the negotiations were in progress, the Company lodged a complaint against the Canadian Government for undertaking the construction of a road between the Lake of the Woods and the Red River Settlement, without its consent and in con-

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tempt of its authority. There were proposals and counter-proposals, cautious bargaining on the part of the Canadian delegates, and determined reluctance on the part of the Company to surrender its sovereignty. But the Imperial authorities steadily inclined towards the side of Canada, and at length terms of settlement proposed by Lord Granville were accepted by the Company and favourably considered by the Canadian Government.

Under this agreement the Company received a money payment of £300,000 from Canada; the right to select a block of land adjoining each of its stations, amounting in the aggregate to 50,000 acres; one-twentieth of the land set out for settlement within the fertile belt for fifty years after the surrender; liberty to carry on its trade without hindrance in its corporate capacity, and freedom from exceptional taxes on its land, trade, or servants. In 1869 the Canadian Parliament ratified this agreement, and passed an act providing for a system of territorial government in Manitoba. On September 28th, Mr. Macdougall received the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor, and at once left the capital for Fort Garry. In advance of his assumption of office, and at least six months before the formal proclamation of annexation could issue, surveying parties were sent up to block out the new territory, and prepare for its settlement and administration under authority of the Canadian Parliament. Mr. Macdougall reached the Manitoba

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frontier late in October, and it was understood that on December 1st the transfer to Canada would be made, and he would enter upon the government of the country. But he found a territory in revolt, an armed resistance to his advance, and a provisional government established in the name of the rebellious settlers, and under the practical dictatorship of a vain, rash, and passionate adventurer, about whose figure centres more of sorrow, of tragedy, and of conflict, than around any other in the annals of confederated Canada.

It is now admitted that the Canadian authorities did not proceed wisely in the negotiations for the entrance of Manitoba into the Confederation. There were prosperous and contented settlers in the Red River country. No one had the right to think that they could be treated as chattels, and summarily handed over to Canada by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was natural, when Canadian officials were sent out to take over the government of the territory, and new surveys were undertaken without adequate consultation with these people, that they should become apprehensive and restless and a ready prey to adventurers and demagogues. All the conditions were ripe for revolt, and the temper of the settlers was altogether unfavourable to serious consideration of the possible consequences of rash proceedings. A Council of Defence was organized under the leadership of John Bruce, Louis Riel, and Ambrose Lepine; the stores of the Hudson's

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Bay Company were plundered, arms, ammunition, and provisions secured, and a force of five or six hundred half-breeds collected. Riel was the active leader of the movement, and however his fitness for the office may be regarded, he at least acquired an absolute authority over the insurgents. The situation was aggravated by the unsatisfactory relations which seem to have existed between Mr. Macdougall and Mr. Joseph Howe, who, as Secretary of State, had gone out to the new territory to arrange with the Hudson's Bay officials for its transfer to the Dominion, and to make such explanations of the intentions of Canada as would overcome the growing uneasiness among the settlers. The charge was freely made and widely believed that Howe fed the disaffection among the half-breeds, and quietly and secretly encouraged the organization of the movement to resist Mr. Macdougall's entrance into the territory. His own letters to Sir John Macdonald, however, convey a very different impression.¹ But it is at least true that when Mr. Macdougall reached Pembina on his way to Fort Garry he was met by a delegation of half-breeds, well instructed in his movements and sternly hostile to his mission. They opposed his advance in the name of the Provisional Council, and the menace was so effectual that after persistent and unsuccessful attempts to communicate with the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company,

¹ Pope's "Memoirs of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. II., pages 51, 52.

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he was forced to withdraw into United States territory. He then issued a proclamation commanding the insurgents to disperse, and threatening reprisals and penalties in case of contumacy and persistence in rebellion. But the proclamation was disregarded and his threats treated with contempt. The proceeding, in fact, rather aggravated than improved the situation. He next attempted with the aid of Col. Dennis, who had been sent West to superintend the surveys which chiefly precipitated the revolt, to raise a force of volunteers in order to put down the rebellion. In this, too, he failed, and at last, baffled and humiliated, he had no recourse but to make his way back to Ottawa.

It is, perhaps, not wide of the mark to say that the mass of the Liberal party secretly rejoiced over the personal discomfiture of Mr. Macdougall. It was felt that he had deserted George Brown at a critical juncture in the fortunes of the Liberal party, had driven a wedge of disruption into the Reform ranks, and had carried many waverers over to Sir John Macdonald. Liberals were, therefore, likely to regard any rupture of his new party relationships as a merited visitation of Providence. There was also a general suspicion that the Conservative leader had sent him out to the Western governorship in order to get rid of an unworkable colleague, and this notion but increased the very human satisfaction which many Liberals had in his failure and humiliation. However this may be, Mr.

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Macdougall found himself loaded with censure, and held to the chief responsibility for the miscarriage of the plans of the Government, and for the outbreak of violence at Red River. He never quite recovered from this crushing blow to his political reputation, and though he was still to work in harness with Sir John Macdonald, he was never thereafter a considerable factor in the councils of the Conservative party.

Mr. Maedougall was a man of exceptional gifts, a brilliant and forceful journalist, and a remarkably effective platform speaker. Up to middle life he ranked as the peer of the greatest of his contemporaries. Thereafter he did nothing commensurate with his talents, and there is a touch of pathos in his failure to make new political alliances and in his inability or disinclination to make himself an enduring force in the country. He sat in the Commons until 1874, then in the Legislature of Ontario as member for Halton from 1875 to 1878, and again in the Commons from 1878 to 1882. He latterly professed political independence, but during the protectionist campaign he was in practical alliance with the Conservative party, and a vitriolic and destructive critic of the Mackenzie Administration. He was, however, excluded from the new Conservative Government, and thenceforward moved steadily towards greater freedom of utterance and wider divergence from the policy of Sir John Macdonald. So far had this detachment proceeded

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by the end of the Parliament that in the general election of 1882 he stood as an independent Liberal candidate for Algoma, and again, in 1887, received the Liberal support in South Grenville. But he was unsuccessful in both contests, and finally withdrew altogether from active participation in public affairs.

On his return from the West he bitterly attacked Howe, and was at no pains to conceal his chagrin over the singular treatment he had received at the hands of the Government. It is not clear that he was altogether responsible for the conspicuous failure of his Western mission ; and if we take only a surface view of these events, it is hard to understand why he was not more heartily supported by the men from whom he had received his commission. Sir John Macdonald contended that Mr. Macdougall had attempted to exercise authority before the Queen's proclamation formally annexing the territory to Canada had issued ; that when he received his appointment, the date on which the union was to be consummated had not been settled ; that he was sent out in advance of the formal ratification of the contract in order to ascertain upon the spot the needs of the country, the course the Government should pursue to avoid taking the settlers by surprise, and the best means of establishing friendly relations between the people of the North-West and the people of Canada.¹ Mr. Macdougall, however, seems to have understood that

¹ Hansard, 1875, pages 68, 69.

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the proclamation would issue in advance of his entrance into the country, and that he was to assume the immediate and active direction of its affairs. Besides the high-handed and undiplomatic conduct of Col. Dennis, and the suspected machinations of Howe, then failing in judgment and declining in vigour, there was also suspicion of bad faith on the part of Governor McTavish of the Hudson's Bay Company, and even of positive collusion with Riel to check and thwart the plans of the Canadian Government. The weight of popular condemnation fell, however, upon the shoulders of Mr. Macdougall, and he had to conduct his defence almost single handed. He was strongly attacked in press and pamphlet, and he struck back with vigour and passion, and sometimes with an approach to ferocity. The most bitter and destructive of these attacks were laid at the door of Howe, and upon that assumption Mr. Macdougall addressed to Howe a series of open letters, which for heat, pungency, and invective, are not excelled in the political literature of Canada.¹

He declared that he was disclosing no secret of the council room when he affirmed that in September, 1868, except Mr. Tilley and himself, every member of the Government was either indifferent or hostile to the acquisition of the North-West. They were not ready to act until it was discovered that a ministerial crisis respecting the route of the

¹ Macdougall's "Eight Letters to Joseph Howe."

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Intercolonial Railway could be avoided only by an immediate agreement and immediate action to secure the transfer of the territories to Canada. He said that the opposing faction in the Cabinet, led by Sir George Cartier and Peter Mitchell, forced Sir John Macdonald, as the price of their consent to the acquisition of the western country, to agree to select the long route for the Intercolonial Railway in order to strengthen their hands in certain Quebec and New Brunswick constituencies. By this surrender, according to Mr. Macdougall, it was necessary to construct 138 additional miles of railway, to abandon the natural commercial route, to impose upon the country for all time the burden of this unnecessary mileage, and to injure permanently the Intercolonial as a medium of inter-provincial traffic. In his own words: "They threw eight millions of dollars into the sea." He bitterly assailed the Catholic clergy, whom he described as "the Jesuit allies" of the Government. "Driven and being driven," he said, "from nearly every country in Europe, these dark birds of evil omen seem to have alighted upon the northern shore of the finest lakes of America, and to have spread themselves under the name of Oblats over the vast regions and among the nomadic tribes of the North-West." He said the bill for the creation of the Province of Manitoba, submitted by the dominant faction in the Cabinet, was on the face of it a bill to establish French half-breed and foreign ecclesiastical

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ascendency in Manitoba. He declared that it was proposed to exclude from the new province the important English and Protestant settlement of the Portage, and that "Father Richot expected by this arrangement to secure for himself and his faction the easy control of the new Government." Mr. Mackenzie, he said, with his compasses on the map, had proved the truth of this suspicion, and many of the supporters of the Government from Ontario had threatened to vote with the Opposition, and thus forced Ministers to enlarge the boundaries of the province and take in the English settlements on the borders of Lake Manitoba. Mr. Macdougall, it may be said, had an old quarrel with the Catholic Church, and was apt to suspect its motives and perhaps to find its hand in transactions with which it had little concern.¹

Dealing with other phases of the controversy, he told Howe that: "The policy of the Canadian Government, as proved by the terms of Sir John Macdonald's bill of 1869 for the temporary government of the Territories, by the sending of a considerable number of officials from Canada, and instructing me to select others from the officials of

¹ Dr. George Bryce, in his "Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company," says that while Bishop Taché was absent in Rome, "one of his most active priests left behind was Father Lestance, the prince of plotters, who has generally been credited with belonging to the Jesuit Order. Lestance had sedulously haunted the presence of the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company; he was a daring and extreme man, and to him and his fellow-Frenchman, the curé of St. Norbert, much of Riel's obstinacy has been attributed."

the Hudson's Bay Company, was well adapted to excite the indignation and the moral, if not the physical, resistance of the people of Red River; while your seditious talk and bibulous fraternization with the leaders of the conspiracy at Fort Garry, and your offensive discourtesy to, and open denunciation of, the loyal portion of the inhabitants, were the most effective complement of the original design that could have been devised. The one provoked rebellion, the other promised it success." He added: "From the day on which you received notice at Ottawa of an armed resistance to my entrance into the Territory as the representative of the Canadian Government—information which did not surprise you—until my return to Canada, the policy of the Government was consistent, and Sir Francis Hincks tells us harmonious, in one direction, namely, to abandon the country." He rejoiced that the authority of the Dominion had been at length established over the vast regions of the West, and could now be endangered only by treason or incapacity at Ottawa. He averred, however, that incapacity reigned supreme in every department, and that treason was more than suspected. "Treason," he said, "not to the lawful sovereign of this Dominion only, but treason to the people of Canada, treason to the interests, civil and religious, of the people of the North-West, treason to human progress, freedom, and civilization in every province of the Dominion."

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But Mr. Macdougall's letters were read in the light of his own failure and humiliation, and, it would seem, rather entertained the country than convinced it of the wisdom of his own proceedings. There was a germ of solid truth in his indictment, but he spoke with diminished prestige and lessened authority. He had abandoned one party, and was now abandoned by the other, and he therefore failed alike to reëstablish his own reputation, or greatly to damage the Administration. It requires a remarkable man, with sympathetic qualities which Mr. Macdougall did not possess, to move opinion single handed, in the teeth of set party views and active party machinery, and he must champion a cause which appeals strongly to the sentiment and even to the prejudices of the community.

Macdougall, however, is strongly supported by Dr. George Bryce in his "Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company." Dr. Bryce insists that the Company, both in London and Fort Garry, was thoroughly loyal to British institutions, but that its government had become decrepit, and the chronic condition of helplessness and governmental decay was emphasized and increased by the illness of Governor McTavish. There was added to this condition of pitiful weakness, the unaccountable and culpable blundering of the Canadian Government. Cartier and Macdougall had learned in England that to send in a party of surveyors before the country was transferred would be offensive to

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the Hudson's Bay Company. More offensive still was the method of conducting the expedition. It was a mark of sublime stupidity to profess, as the Canadian Government did, that the money spent on this survey was a benevolent device for relieving the sufferers from the grasshopper visitation. Moreover, the half-breeds engaged upon the work were harshly treated, and received poor wages, and payment even of such wages as they were promised was delayed. "The evidently selfish and grasping spirit shown in this expedition sent to survey and build the Dawson Road, yet turning aside to claim unoccupied lands, to sow the seeds of doubt and suspicion in the minds of a people hitherto secluded from the world, was most unpatriotic and dangerous." There was thus, upon the one hand, a helpless moribund government, without decision and without actual authority, and upon the other, an irritating, selfish and aggressive expedition, taking possession of the land before it was transferred to Canada, and assuming the air of conquerors.

Dr. Bryce goes on to say that the action of certain persons in the United States also constituted a potential factor in the rebellion. For twenty years and more the trade of the Red River Settlement had been largely carried on by way of St. Paul, in the State of Minnesota. The Hudson Bay route and York boat brigade were unable to compete with the facilities offered

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by the approach of the railway to the Mississippi River. Accordingly long lines of Red River carts took loads of furs to St. Paul and brought back freight for the Company. The Red River trade was a recognized source of profit in St. Paul, and familiarity in trade led to an interest on the part of the Americans in the public affairs of Red River. Hot-headed and sordid people in Red River settlement had actually considered and discussed a connection between the settlement and the United States. At Pembina, on the border between Rupert's Land and the United States, lived a nest of desperadoes, willing to take any steps to accomplish their purposes. They had access to all the mails which came from England to Canada marked "via Pembina." Pembina was an outpost refuge for law-breakers and outcasts from the United States. Its people used all their power to disturb the peace of Red River settlement. Many Americans had also settled in the new village of Winnipeg, now rising near the walls of Fort Garry, and these men held private meetings looking to the creation of trouble, and the provocation of feeling that might lead to change of allegiance. "Furthermore," Dr. Bryce says, "the writer is able to state, on the information of a man high in the service of Canada, and a man not unknown in Manitoba, that there was a large sum of money, of which an amount was named as high as one million dollars, which was available in St. Paul for

the purpose of securing a hold by the Americans on the fertile plains of Rupert's Land." Here then, Dr. Bryce points out, was an agency of most dangerous proportions, an element in the village of Winnipeg able to control the election of the first delegate to the Settler's Convention, a desperate body of men on the border, who with Machiavellian persistence fanned the flame of discontent, and a reserve of power in St. Paul ready to take advantage of any emergency.

Dr. Bryce proceeds: "A still more insidious and threatening influence was at work. Here again the writer is aware of the gravity of the statement he is making, but he has evidence of the clearest kind for his position. A dangerous religious element in the country—ecclesiastics from old France—who had no love for Britain, no love for Canada, no love for any country, no love for society, no love for peace! These plotters were in close association with the half-breeds, dictated their policy, and freely mingled with the rebels. One of them was an intimate friend of the leader of the rebellion, consulted with him in his plans, and exercised a marked influence on his movements. This same foreign priest, with Jesuitical cunning, gave close attendance on the sick Governor, and through his family exercised a constant and detrimental power upon the only source of authority then in the land. Furthermore, an Irish student and teacher, with a Fenian hatred for all things British, was a 'familiar'

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of the leader of the rebellion, and with true Milesian zeal advanced the cause of the revolt. Can a more terrible combination be imagined than this? A decrepit government with the executive officer sick; a rebellious and chronically dissatisfied Metis element; a government at Ottawa far removed by distance, committing with unvarying regularity blunder after blunder; a greedy and foreign cabal planning to seize the country, and a secret Jesuitical plot to keep the Governor from action and to incite the fiery Metis to revolt!" Dr. Bryce adds: "Probably the real attitude of Bishop Taché will never be known, though his strong French Canadian associations and love of British connection make it seem hardly possible that he could have been implicated in the rebellion."¹

From the first the manifest desire of federal ministers was to overcome the revolt at Red River by conciliation and explanation. Upon the return of Mr. Macdougall they sent up Vicar General Thibault, for thirty-seven years a missionary in the West, Colonel de Salaberry, of Quebec, and Mr. Donald A. Smith, Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Montreal, to "inquire into the causes of the rebellion and to explain to the people the intentions of the Canadian Government." Bishop Taché, who had large influence with the half-breeds, was recalled from the Ecumenical Council at Rome

¹ "The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company" by George Bryce, M.A., LL.D., pages 457-468.

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and persuaded to aid the Commission to secure a pacific settlement. This desirable result would probably have been reached through the tact and sagacity of Mr. Smith and the good offices of Mgr. Taché, if other influences had not intervened to excite Riel and precipitate open hostilities. Many of the English settlers resented Riel's assumption of authority, and from the Portage, where English influence was dominant, a force started out to subdue the Metis and overthrow the rule of the provisional government. The expedition was led by Major Boulton, and was joined by a contingent of English half-breeds from Kildonan. This movement drove Riel to extreme measures in order to assert and maintain his authority. He set up a dictatorship, seized the federal commissioners, threatened and imprisoned the settlers who refused to recognize his leadership, overcame the weak remnant of the Portage expedition which reached the neighbourhood of Fort Garry, and finally put Thomas Scott to death with vulgar bravado, stolid heartlessness, and reckless contempt of consequences. Scott, one of the most impetuous and aggressive of western loyalists, was condemned without trial, or at least tried in his absence, and wholly without opportunity for defence, and shot down within an hour after he had learned that his death was decreed. He was a member of the powerful Orange Association, and the fact tended greatly to precipitate upon

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the country one of those infernal sectarian quarrels which so often divide and bedevil the Canadian people.

The Government still held to counsels of patience and methods of conciliation. Mr. Donald A. Smith, who was captured with other loyalists, soon regained his liberty, and with Mgr. Taché laboured strenuously to pacify the settlers and reconcile Riel to the rule and authority of the Canadian Parliament. Father Richot, Mr. John Black, and Mr. Alfred H. Scott, were selected by a council of settlers to go to Ottawa and lay their grievance before the Government. In order to give confidence to the resident population and remove misapprehension, it was determined by the federal authorities to establish a provincial instead of a territorial government, and thus give the people of the settlements the full management of their local affairs. In March, 1870, a bill to this effect was introduced in Parliament by Sir John Macdonald, and the Province of Manitoba thereby created. The Liberal leaders argued that if this plan of responsible government had been adopted at the outset there would have been no revolt. But while they charged lack of vigilance and rashness of procedure against the Government, they insisted that a force must be sent out to subdue the rebellion and establish and enforce Canadian authority. Mr. Mackenzie, speaking for the Liberal party in Parliament, insisted that we must restore order in

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the West peremptorily, "or cease to be a nation." He contended, in opposition to a motion by Mr. Masson of Quebec affirming the inexpediency of sending Imperial and Canadian troops to the North-West, that "they should send five, ten, twenty thousand men if necessary, but order should be restored." The Liberal leaders in Ontario vigorously emphasized Mr. Mackenzie's demand, and the murder of Scott and the vindication of Canadian authority in the West became burning issues in provincial politics.¹

Mr. Macdougall, however, received his best support, and the agitation its keenest incitement, from the Canada First group, which now first set its impress upon the public life of the country. In 1869, five young men, all of whom were to achieve distinction, met at Ottawa, and with all the ardour and enthusiasm of youth and of a vigorous and sensitive patriotism, resolved to labour for the moderation of political partisanship, the mitigation of localism and sectionalism, the purification of politics, and the cultivation of a Canadian national sentiment. The five who formed the nucleus of the movement which developed into the Canada First Party, were Col. George T. Denison, W. A. Foster, R. G. Haliburton, Charles Mair, and H. J. Morgan. These were soon joined by John Schultz

¹ "The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, His Life and Times," by William Buckingham, private secretary, and the Hon. George W. Ross, LL.D., page 263.

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of Manitoba. Their first meetings were held in Mr. Morgan's room at the capital. Recruits were later added at Toronto, and something like a formal organization was effected. Early in the history of the movement the original half dozen were joined by J. D. Edgar, Thomas Walmsley, Joseph E. Macdougall, Hugh Scott, George R. Kingsmill, William Canniff, Richard Graham, and George M. Rae. These constituted the directing committee of the organization, and when Scott was murdered and Mair and Schultz arrested at Fort Garry, they set to work to excite public opinion against the timidity and vacillation which prevailed in the ministerial councils at Ottawa, and to force the equipment and despatch of a military expedition for the suppression of the revolt. Col. Denison was undoubtedly the leader of the movement as Foster and Haliburton were its most eloquent spokesmen. Kingsmill was then editor of the *Toronto Telegraph*, and Foster had free access to its columns. When Scott was murdered the *Telegraph* appeared with the "turned rules" and the black borders of mourning. The spirit and passion of Foster's editorial utterances, joined to the soberer but aggressive and unequivocal articles of *The Globe*, set Ontario aflame, and powerfully influenced the course of events. When Mair, Schultz, Dr. Lynch, and J. J. Setter, after their escape from Fort Garry, arrived at Toronto, they were made the guests of the city, and at the instance of the

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Canada First group a public meeting was called to voice Toronto's sympathy for the refugees, and to express the popular demand for prompt and adequate measures to vindicate Canadian authority.

The meeting was called for April 6th, 1870, at St. Lawrence Hall, but such a vast crowd assembled that it was necessary to adjourn outside, and from the portico of the hall the speakers addressed eight or ten thousand people. Mayor Medcalf presided, and speeches were made by the Hon. Matthew Crooks Cameron, Schultz, Mair, Lynch, and Setter, and the active leaders of the Canada First movement. The resolutions adopted by the meeting welcomed Dr. Schultz and his companions from the Red River, "who fearlessly and at the sacrifice of their liberty and property have nobly resisted the usurpation of power by the murderer Riel"; affirmed that the state of anarchy and rebellion prevailing in the North-West Territories called for the prompt and energetic action of the Dominion Government; expressed the strongest indignation at "the cold-blooded murder of poor Scott"; and declared that "it would be a gross injustice to the loyal inhabitants of Red River, humiliating to our national honour, and contrary to all British traditions for our Government to receive, negotiate, or treat with the emissaries of those who have robbed, imprisoned and murdered loyal Canadians whose only fault was zeal for British insti-

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tutions, whose only crime was devotion to the old flag.”¹ A few days later a great Liberal demonstration was held on Front Street opposite John Hallam’s premises, and an audience of six or seven thousand persons was roused to enthusiasm and excitement by similar trenchant condemnation of the murder of Scott and the conduct of federal ministers.

The delegates from Riel’s Provisional Council were then on their way to Ottawa to lay the grievances of the settlers before the Dominion Government, and the *Telegraph* of April 8th had an article by Foster, headed “The Messengers of the Murderer—Are they to be Received?” The writer asked if Sir John Macdonald proposed to bring the Government and the people of Canada down to the level of Riel and his fellow rebels, to treat with, and make himself and his colleagues the equals of murderers, and to shake the hands that were red with Canadian blood? Were a thousand commissioners to come down from Riel, their presence should not prevent the Government from sending a force to the country. A force must be sent under any circumstances. Our law and our authority must be firmly established. The country must be opened up to our people, and loyal men must be protected in the enjoyment of their rights for all time to

¹ During the troubles at Red River, a paper called the *New Nation*, issued as the organ of the Provisional Government, openly advocated union with the United States.

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come. This could be done only by the exercise of military power. Even though Riel should make an unconditional surrender, the country would still be compelled to send soldiers to the territory in order to prevent further trouble, and in order to see that when once hoisted over Fort Garry, the old flag should never again be hauled down. What could Sir John Macdonald hope to gain by receiving the rebels? Was the strange announcement that the Premier had made on the floor of the House another proof of the power of Sir George Cartier? Must this be taken as more evidence of the fact that Sir George was the leader and Sir John the follower? Cartier, in order to satisfy the people of his province was determined to receive the rebel emissaries. Was Sir John Macdonald, the representative of the Province of Ontario, compelled to bow to that determination, and forced to prepare the public for the coming disgrace by announcing his intention in the Parliament of the country? Sir John Macdonald, Foster said, must be breathing an atmosphere vastly different from that which prevailed at Toronto, or he could not dare to talk of trifling with the national honour. He would not dare to hint at this national disgrace. During that self-same hour that his solitary voice proclaimed the coming disgrace, ten thousand voices in the capital of Ontario united in declaring that there should be no treaty with traitors, no intercourse with murderers, and the shouts of these ten thousand voices

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found an echo in the hearts of all the loyal people throughout the length and breadth of the land. This was no question of party. This was a question of patriotism, and the man who trifled with it trifled with the honour and fair fame of Canada. The higher his position the greater his crime. Sir John Macdonald must remember that if these messengers of murderers were received it would be an everlasting and intolerable disgrace to the Canadian people. He must remember that by holding communication with them for one moment he would give his opponents fresh power, and drive from his side thousands who had ever been his friends. He must remember that what ten thousand people in Toronto had said a million people in Ontario would repeat. He must remember that the Canadian people valued their national honour as they did their lives, and were prepared to sacrifice their lives rather than that their honour should be tarnished by one spot or blemish. And let him remember that to the people who thus held their honour with their lives, he and his colleagues had soon to render an account.

A few days later, under the caption "Riel's Ruffians," Foster wrote; "The First Minister of the Crown announced in the House a few days ago that these men are to be received by the Government, their complaints are to be heard, their bill of rights is to be carefully perused, and probably every demand they make is to be granted. In the whole

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history of the Empire we can find no parallel for this disgrace. It has never been the policy of Great Britain to treat with rebels in arms against her authority. It has been her policy, and the policy of all other civilized nations as well, to trounce them into submission first, and listen to their complaints afterwards. But we do things in another fashion in Canada in this nineteenth century. We allow rebels to kill and rob our people, to laugh at our authority, to insult our representative, to trample our flag in the dust, and then, after they have done all these things, nay, while they are actually committing these outrages, we receive their agents and treat with them for terms. . . . It is not too late to prevent this disgrace. The ruffians have not yet arrived in our country. It is an easy thing to send them word to the effect that their visit will be fruitless, and advise them to return to the man who sent them."

The statement of Sir John Macdonald in the House of Commons to which Foster took such strong exception, was elicited by a question from John Hillyard Cameron. He had asked how a delegation coming with their hands red with the blood of a fellow Canadian would be treated. The Prime Minister in reply eulogized Judge Black, the leader of the delegation, and intimated that he and his companions would be received by the Government. Mr. Mackenzie promptly dissented. He agreed with Sir John Macdonald's estimate of

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Black, but urged that Richot and Scott were accomplices of Riel and ought not to be received. This was the general feeling in Toronto and throughout Ontario. Public meetings like those at Toronto were held at Ottawa, at Hamilton, at London, and at other centres in the province, and one also at Montreal. Everywhere energetic protests were entered against the projected negotiations with the agents of the insurgents. There were even threats that Richot and Scott would not be allowed to pass through Toronto, and Hugh Scott, a brother of Riel's victim, had a warrant issued for their arrest as accomplices in the murder. When it was found that the delegates had taken alarm and had proceeded to Ottawa by way of Ogdensburg, the warrant was sent on to the capital, and there, on April 14th, Richot and Scott were arrested. They came before Mr. Justice Galt on a writ of *habeas corpus*. John Hillyard Cameron appeared for the delegates, and was thought to have been directly inspired by Sir John Macdonald. Denison and Foster were active in these proceedings. Denison had gone to Ottawa with Schultz and his companions from the Red River, and remained at the capital to press the prosecution. The delegates were remanded again and again, but it was manifestly impossible under the circumstances to secure adequate evidence to justify the charge. They were at length released, and the proceedings abandoned.

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The Government seemed, however, to bow to public opinion, and towards the middle of May a punitive expedition, under the command of Col. Wolseley, started by way of Collingwood and Thunder Bay, over the old fur traders' route for the Red River. But the despatch of the military contingent did not silence nor abate the activity of the faction in the Cabinet which was determined to compose the quarrel by conciliation rather than by force. Just at this time Sir John Macdonald was prostrated by a long and serious illness, and Sir George Cartier, who held the portfolio of Militia and Defence, became the Leader of the Government. In July, Lord Lisgar was at Niagara Falls, and Mr. Haliburton, one of the leaders of the Canada First party, who was leaving for England by way of New York, sought an interview with the Governor-General in order to urge that vigilance should be exercised against a possible attempt to introduce the French laws of Quebec into the North-West. His suspicions were excited when he found that Lisgar and his suite had moved from the Clifton House to a small hotel at the Suspension Bridge. Suspicion deepened into alarm when in the course of conversation the Governor-General mentioned that within a few days he would be joined there by Sir George Cartier, Mgr. Taché, and Mr. Archibald, who had succeeded Mr. Macdougall as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. Haliburton said nothing to Lisgar, but he jumped to the con-

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clusion that a particular and important action was contemplated. He assumed that an amnesty for the Red River insurgents was to be proclaimed, and Mr. Archibald and Mgr. Taché were to be sent west through United States territory with the writ of clemency. He wired Schultz, who was then at London, that mischief was afloat, and urged by letter that active steps should be taken to defeat the plans of Cartier and force Archibald to go west through Canadian territory in rear of the Wolseley expedition. Schultz communicated with the Canada First group at Toronto, and a call was sent out for a public meeting to protest against the suspected intention of the Government, and check the premature grant of amnesty to the insurgents.¹ The meeting was fixed for July 22nd, and in addition to the formal posters the fences and bill-boards of Toronto were decorated with a series of inflammatory placards. One of these asked, "Shall French rebels rule our Dominion?"; another, "Shall our Queen's representative go a thousand miles through a foreign territory to demean himself to a thief and a murderer?" Other placards read: "Will the volunteers accept defeat at the hand of the Minister of Militia?"; "Orangemen, is Brother Scott forgotten already?"; "Men of Ontario, shall Scott's blood cry in vain for vengeance?" It is hardly necessary to observe that in Toronto

¹ See an article on Robert Grant Haliburton by Col. Geo. T. Denison in the *Canadian Magazine* for June, 1901.

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such placards were likely to secure a successful meeting.

The chief speakers on this occasion were Mr. Macdougall, Mr. D'Arcy Boulton, Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie, Q.C., Mr. J. D. Edgar, Captain Bennett, Col. Denison, and Mr. Foster. A resolution moved by Mr. Macdougall declared that the proposal to recall, at the request of the rebel government, the expedition on its way to Fort Garry to establish law and order, would be an act of supreme folly, an abdication of authority, destructive of all fitness for the protection afforded to loyal subjects by a constitutional government, and a death blow to our national honour. Another, moved by Mr. Edgar, recited that the overthrow by the rebels of the existing government in the Red River Territory by force of arms, the seizure and appropriation to their own purposes of private property, the imprisonment and ill treatment of Canadians and loyal natives, the barbarous murder of one of their prisoners, Thomas Scott, the cruel expulsion in mid-winter of those who refused to join them in their unlawful project, and their extravagant demands upon the Canadian Government, under threat of further outrages and the transfer of their allegiance to a foreign country, deprived the leaders of the conspiracy of all sympathy, and called for the prompt punishment of the perpetrators of such crimes. Still another, moved by Col. Denison, affirmed that in view of

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the proposed amnesty to Riel, and withdrawal of the expedition, it was necessary to declare that "The Dominion must and shall have the North-West Territories in fact as well as in name, and if our Government, through weakness or treachery, cannot or will not protect our citizens in it, and recalls our volunteers, it will then become the duty of the people of Ontario to organize a scheme of armed immigration in order that those Canadians who have been driven from their homes may be reinstated, that with the many who desire to settle in new fields they may have an assured guarantee against the repetition of such outrages as have disgraced our country in the past, that the majesty of the law may be vindicated against all criminals, no matter by whom instigated or by whom protected, and that we may never again see the flag of our ancestors trampled in the dust, or a foreign emblem flaunting itself in any part of our broad Dominion."

The protest was so spirited and so emphatic, and public opinion in Ontario responded so promptly, that Cartier was forced to halt, and Mr. Archibald took his way over the "snow road," as it was called, in the rear of the Wolseley expedition. The journey was long and difficult, and beset with such formidable obstacles that it was well on towards the end of August when the expedition reached Fort Garry. It was then found that Riel and his comrades had fled, and that all resistance to the peaceful occupation of the Territory by Canada had collapsed.

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Mr. Archibald, more fortunate than Mr. Macdougall, reached Fort Garry early in September, and on the 6th of that month entered upon his duties as Lieutenant-Governor of the new province. A year later Manitoba was threatened with a Fenian invasion under O'Donoghue, who had been associated with Riel in the Red River insurrection, and there was grave fear that the French half-breeds of Manitoba would join hands with O'Donoghue and his confederates. Archibald made overtures to Riel and Lepine who were still the recognized leaders of the Metis. They responded to his appeal, and organized the inhabitants for the defence of the country.

The Governor set a high value upon the services performed by Riel and Lepine in this connection, and used language that was afterwards construed as a promise of immunity for the offences committed during the Red River outbreak. But in Ontario, the agitation for the punishment of Scott's murderers was vigorously maintained, and the argument of Ministers that the federal authorities ceased to have jurisdiction when the provincial government was constituted, was neither well received nor generally accepted. The common opinion of Ontario was that the execution of Scott was hardly distinguishable from deliberate murder; and separated as we now are from the passion and clamour of that time, it is not easy to reach any other conclusion. But even if this be admitted, the

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fact does not constitute an adequate justification for the action of the Ontario Legislature in offering a reward of \$5,000 for Riel's apprehension. The question lay within the province of the federal authorities, and no good purpose was served by making the death of Scott an issue in local politics, and enmeshing legitimate provincial questions in the incidents of a revolt in Manitoba.¹ But public feeling was greatly excited, the Orange Association was in a vengeful temper, and it was natural that the Liberal politicians, who had so often felt the force of that powerful body at the polls, should take advantage of the unusual situation, and profit by the keen and far-reaching anger Scott's execution had evoked.

On the other hand, the French-Canadians of Quebec were linked to the Metis of the Red River by the sympathetic ties of blood and speech, and politicians in that province industriously exploited

¹ In 1871, on the eve of the general election, the Ontario Legislature, on motion of Mr. Blake, adopted a resolution declaring: "That the cold-blooded murder for his out-spoken loyalty to the Queen, of Thomas Scott, lately a resident of this province, and an immigrant thence to the North-West, has impressed this House with a deep feeling of sorrow and indignation, and in the opinion of this House, every effort should be made to bring to trial the perpetrators of this great crime, who as yet go unwhipt of justice." In January, 1872, after Mr. Blake had become Premier of Ontario, a second resolution was adopted, affirming: "That this House feels bound to express its regret that no effectual steps have been taken to bring to justice the murderers of Thomas Scott, and is of opinion that something should be done to that end." In accordance with this resolution, at the request of Mr. Blake, \$5,000 was appropriated as a reward for Riel's apprehension.

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this sympathetic relationship for personal and party advantage. It is true that only thirteen members of the House of Commons voted to strike out the sum of \$1,460,000 put into the Supply Bill to meet the costs of the Red River expedition, and to open up the western country. But this vote did not represent the real state of feeling in Quebec, nor stay the agitation for clemency for Riel and his associates. There is hardly any doubt that Sir George Cartier was a determined champion of Riel in the Cabinet, and it seems clear that he sought a way to baulk the Wolseley expedition. In the general election of 1872, Cartier was defeated in Montreal East, and aside from other exceptional influences contributing to that result, it is believed that the militia vote was cast for his opponent in almost a solid body in protest against his attitude towards the Canadian militia, his excessive consideration for Riel and his allies, and his ill-concealed opposition to the employment of force against the insurgents. It was, however, mainly due to the active intervention of Bishop Bourget and his ecclesiastical subordinates that Cartier was beaten. This intervention was provoked partly by his alliance with the Sulpicians against the Bishop's project to divide the old parish of Notre Dame, of which the disciples of St. Sulpice were pastors by right of their charter, and partly by resentment at Sir John Macdonald's refusal to disallow the New Brunswick School Bill of 1871, by which the

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separate school system of that province was abolished in law, even if it still exists in practice. Cartier was afterwards returned for the western constituency of Provencher, which contained the bulk of the French population of Manitoba, and Riel's name was signed to one of the telegrams of congratulation he received from his new parliamentary borough. Ill-health, however, forced him to go abroad, and he died in England in May, 1873.

In the general election of January 22nd, 1874, which brought the Liberal party into office, Riel was elected as his successor in the representation of Provencher. Notwithstanding that he was now under indictment in Manitoba for the murder of Scott, he came to Ottawa and managed to sign the roll of the Commons and subscribe the oath. When his presence at the capital became known, a warrant for his arrest was procured, but it is doubtful if it was intended to be executed. If he had directly invited arrest, he would hardly have been accommodated. There was general suspicion, and possibly in high quarters particular knowledge, that his freedom had been at least equivocally guaranteed by the Queen's ministers, and that the pledges of amnesty, if not legally conclusive, were too clear and too direct to be lightly violated. But it was at least permissible to question his right to sit in Parliament, and necessary to make some concession to public opinion. Besides, the Conservative party had passed into opposition, and a subject which had

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given infinite trouble to the Conservative leaders was now available for the harassment of the Liberal party. Accordingly, on March 31st, 1874, Mr. Mackenzie Bowell moved that Riel be ordered to attend in his place in Parliament on the next day. As he failed to appear, he was expelled two weeks afterwards by a vote of 124 to 68, and a new writ issued for Provencher.¹

¹ The principal sources of this chapter are Hansard; the newspapers and pamphlets of the time; "Canada under the Administration of the Earl of Dufferin," by Dr. George Stewart; "The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company," by Dr. George Bryce; the "History of Canada," by Dr. W. H. Withrow; "The Great Company," by Beckles Willson; Pope's "Memoirs of Sir John Macdonald," and the Buckingham-Ross "Life of Alexander Mackenzie."

CHAPTER VIII

THE AMNESTY

IT was on the question of Riel's expulsion that Mr. Laurier first addressed the House of Commons in English. The main issue to be determined was whether or not Riel had received an explicit and unconditional promise of amnesty. There was abundant evidence to support this contention. In March, 1870, Mgr. Taché, professing to speak for both the Canadian and Imperial Governments, gave Riel an assurance of amnesty wide enough to cover the murder of Scott and all other offences committed during the outbreak. In June, 1870, Richot, Black, and Scott, who laid the grievances of the settlers before the federal Ministers, assured Mgr. Taché that they had received an equally definite promise of complete amnesty for Riel and his associates. A letter from Sir George Cartier to Mgr. Taché confirmed the promise of amnesty. Parliament was also bound to consider the acceptance by Mr. Archibald of the services of Riel and Lepine when Manitoba was threatened with a Fenian invasion, and the Governor's public recognition of their timely and useful work in organizing the people for defence. There were three motions before the House. Mr. Mackenzie Bowell moved

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for Riel's immediate expulsion. Mr. Holton moved to defer action until a report on the question of amnesty could be had from the committee which had just been appointed to inquire into the causes of the Red River troubles. Mr. Mousseau moved for immediate and unconditional amnesty.

Mr. Laurier's speech was made in support of the Holton amendment. He said that amendment laid down the only course that the House should pursue, and that he would be guilty of an act of cowardice if for any motive whatever he allowed himself to be turned away from the defence of the opinions which he regarded as the soundest and safest on the subject. He said that between Riel and himself there was no bond of sympathy. The House was called upon to exercise strictly judicial functions. There was no proof before Parliament of an indictment against the member for Provencher. It was impossible, therefore, to pretend that he was a fugitive from justice. A warrant that was not executed was no legal proof of an indictment. He pointed out that over and over again Riel had claimed that the old Administration had promised him an amnesty, that this claim was repeated and emphasized by his friends and sympathizers, and that ministers then in office could not be induced to confirm or deny these statements. If Riel had this promise of amnesty in the Queen's name for all acts committed in Manitoba, as head of the provisional government, it was not reasonable that

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he should now desire to go before the courts, and it was not just to brand him as contumacious and a fugitive from justice. The committee which had been appointed to determine finally whether or not an amnesty had been promised had just begun its work, and it would be inconsistent and illogical for the House to come to any decision upon the question until the committee had reported. He dealt with the case of Sadlier before the Imperial Parliament in 1857, which Mr. Bowell had cited in support of his motion. Sadlier was charged with fraud in connection with a Tipperary Bank, and had fled before a warrant for his arrest could be executed. Mr. Laurier showed that a motion for expulsion was rejected because the member under attack could still come before the courts to stand his trial, and it would, therefore, have been premature to declare him contumacious. He detailed the careful and methodical steps taken to notify Sadlier of the order commanding him to appear in his seat, showed that no action at all had been taken to serve Riel with the order for his appearance in Parliament, and contended that until this was done or attempted, Mr. Bowell's motion ought not to prevail. The opportunity to make defence was the right and privilege of every British subject. Many decisions, just in themselves and wholly equitable, had been reversed by the higher courts of England solely because the party condemned had not been notified to defend himself.

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He opposed Mr. Mousseau's motion with equal logic and vigour. He showed again that the House had unanimously named a committee to inquire into the whole question of the amnesty, pointed out that at that very hour the committee was sitting, and Mgr. Taché was giving his evidence, and argued that to declare an amnesty before the committee had well entered upon its work, would be premature, irrational, and absurd. He contended that Mr. Mousseau's chief object was to compromise the Administration, but confessed that his own mind leaned towards amnesty in view of the recognition Riel had received from the former Administration. He showed that at least Sir George Cartier had treated with Riel as the head of an organized government, and had received from Riel's delegates their letters of credit signed with his own hand. If this were true, then the logical consequence must follow, and the amnesty must be granted. He admitted that the execution of Scott was a crime, but argued that it was a political act, and that Riel in signing the warrant for Scott's execution simply gave effect to the sentence of a court. However illegal was the court, or however iniquitous the sentence, the fact alone that the sentence was pronounced by a court, and that that court existed *de facto* was sufficient to impart an exclusively political character to the execution. He refused to regard Riel as a rebel. "How," he asked, "was it possible to use such language?"

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What act of rebellion did he commit? Did he ever raise any other standard than the national flag? Did he ever proclaim any other authority than the sovereign authority of the Queen? No, never. His whole crime and the crime of his friends was that they wanted to be treated like British subjects, and not to be bartered away like common cattle." He said that he would regard the events at Red River as constituting a glorious page in our history if they had not been stained with the blood of Scott. "But," he said, "such is the state of human nature and of all that is human; good and evil are constantly intermingled; the most glorious cause is not free from impurity, and the vilest may have its noble side." He closed with these words: "We have no proof of the facts on which the motion for expulsion rests, and to adopt that motion would be not only to commit an arbitrary act, but to establish a precedent which will be a perpetual danger to our free institutions."¹

The speech did not change the mind of Parliament, but it greatly enhanced the speaker's reputation. The argument was strong, consistent, and logical, the English limpid and classic, the manner restrained and elevated. It was this speech which Dr. Fréchette said "carried him at one bound to the distinction of being almost without a peer among the English-speaking debaters of the Dominion;" and at least the performance definitely

¹ See "Wilfrid Laurier on the Platform," Quebec, 1890, pages 21, 40.

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determined his right to an influential voice in the public councils. The *Montreal Herald* said: "Mr. Laurier made a magnificent speech in support of Mr. Holton's amendment. It was the best of the whole debate—calm, logical, and thoughtful. He has made his mark and placed himself in the front rank of our debaters." It is fair to say that the speech was not well received in Ontario, nor was it satisfactory to the more turbulent elements in Quebec, which Mr. Mousseau represented.

It would seem at this distance, and in the light of all that has been revealed, that Riel's expulsion was a natural proceeding, while the evidence which Mr. Laurier advanced to show that he had received assurances of amnesty was conclusive. It is worth while, perhaps, to quote here Earl Carnarvon's despatch to Lord Dufferin in this connection. The Secretary of State for the Colonies said: "Although a murder such as that of Scott cannot be allowed to go unpunished on the ground that it was connected with political disturbances, yet in so far as it did result from political circumstances those who were guilty of it may be deemed to have earned a merciful consideration through their subsequent good service to the State, and that for these services their life should be spared. While this is no doubt the judicial construction of evidence reported by the special committee, it is quite evident that it was not the sense in which the Government was understood either by Archbishop Taché or by the

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delegates from the provisional government. That the impression was left upon their minds that a full and unconditional amnesty would be granted if they recognized the authority of the Dominion Government there cannot be the slightest doubt on reading the evidence."

It was not until the session of 1877 that Parliament saw the end of this unfortunate and embittered controversy. In 1875, Mr. Mackenzie asked Parliament to grant a full amnesty to all persons concerned in the insurrection except Riel, Lepine, and O'Donoghue. For Riel and Lepine he recommended five years' banishment from the country. But as O'Donoghue had attempted to throw a body of Fenians into the North-West, no measure of clemency in his behalf was suggested. Lepine had been arrested at the instance of the provincial authorities, convicted of complicity in the murder of Scott, and sentenced to death. Lord Dufferin, however, intervened to save him from the gallows. He undertook, under the Royal Instructions which gave the Governor-General power to dispense with the advice of his ministers under special circumstances, to say that the case had passed beyond the province of departmental administration, and that he was empowered "to exercise the prerogative of the Crown according to his independent judgment and on his own personal responsibility." Mr. Blake, at a subsequent session, persuaded Parliament to demand from the

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Imperial authorities such amendment of the Royal Instructions as would prevent the Governor-General exercising the prerogative of pardon except in accordance with the advice of his ministers. In the meantime, however, Lord Dufferin did act on his own responsibility, and commuted the sentence of death passed upon Lepine to two years' imprisonment and permanent forfeiture of political rights. Less fortunate than his leader, Lepine served out the term of imprisonment. Mr. Mousseau, in 1875, renewed his motion for unconditional amnesty, but it received only twenty-three votes, and only fifty votes were cast against Mr. Mackenzie's motion for amnesty to Riel and Lepine, conditional upon five years' banishment, and unconditional pardon for all other participants in the insurrection.

Mr. Laurier also spoke during this debate, and some of his sentences are worth quoting. He said: "The question would be decided at once and forever if decided in a sense of leniency, but not if decided in a harsh sense, in a sense of mistaken justice; for there was no more certain fact, as proved by the most unerring testimony of historical events, than that political offences must sooner or later be forgiven." He said: "The Liberal party of Quebec did not make it a question of race or religion, but dealt with it solely as a question of justice. For his part he regretted that it was so often deemed necessary to remind the House that our nation is composed of different creeds and races. and that

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the law gives to each and all in this Dominion a full and equal share of liberty and happiness. It was true they were separated by their origin and religion, but they were united by a common aim and common interests." He insisted that these were the principles of the Liberals of Quebec, and they "intended not only upon the floor of this House, but also throughout this Dominion, to put down questions of race and religion." He accepted the conditional amnesty proposed by the Government as embodying the view of the Imperial authorities, he recognized that complete amnesty could not be had, and he held that the loyal acceptance of Mr. Mackenzie's motion by the people of Quebec "would have the effect of burying the past in oblivion, and of promoting a policy of self-respect between the two great provinces of the Dominion."¹

The formal expulsion of Riel from Parliament in April, 1874, was not final. He was returned again at the new election for Provencher that was held five months afterwards. On February 15th, 1875, Mr. Mackenzie laid before Parliament the sentence of outlawry which had been passed upon Riel by Chief Justice Wood of Manitoba five days before, and then on February 24th asked the House to declare that Riel, according to the record, had been adjudged an outlaw for felony. The motion was accepted, the seat thus vacated, and Riel was not again a candidate. In the session of 1876, and

¹ Hansard, February 12th, 1875, Pages 116, 119.

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again in 1877, Mr. Costigan moved that O'Donoghue be included in the conditional amnesty granted to Riel and Lepine. In each case the motion was opposed by the Government, and therefore defeated. But if Mr. Costigan did not succeed in Parliament, he undoubtedly damaged the Administration in the country. Persistent appeals were made to the Irish Catholic element to revenge the Government's treatment of O'Donoghue, and even Sir John Macdonald turned the rejection of Mr. Costigan's motion to excellent political account.

There is hardly any better illustration of Sir John Macdonald's remarkable capacity for the management of diverse elements than is revealed in his method of presenting O'Donoghue to the Irish electors. For example, he said at Cobourg, where there is a considerable Irish Catholic population: "O'Donoghue, by his industry and speculation had got together lands and money in Manitoba, but he was only an Irishman and must stay out of the country. He was proud to say that he and his friends had voted to have O'Donoghue treated as the others, and he would call the attention of his Roman Catholic friends to the fact that the most prominent men who had claimed rights for O'Donoghue were his friends, Mackenzie Bowell and John White, both of them Grand Masters among the Orangemen." This series of parliamentary events furnishes a striking illustration of the glorious freedom of opposition. Mr. Mackenzie Bowell attacked

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the Government for recommending even conditional amnesty for Riel and Lepine. Mr. Mousseau demanded unconditional amnesty. Mr. Costigan insisted that the leader of a Fenian invasion should be covered by the Crown's clemency. Each damaged the Administration, while the unity and strength of the Opposition were hardly affected.

It is not now contended that the insurrection in Manitoba was consciously provoked by the Canadian authorities. It was never intended to disturb or dispossess the Red River settlers. It was not intended to imperil any man's possessions, or abridge any man's rights. But ministers were careless and badly advised. They did not see far, if they saw at all, into conditions in the West. They did not understand that the settlers were peculiarly favourable to the easy lordship of the Hudson's Bay Company. They forgot that the Metis spoke another language, and could not know what status they would acquire under a territorial government, and had small comprehension of the genius of British institutions. They forgot that these men had the right of birth on the soil, that they must be apprehensive of their security of tenure, and would naturally resent any arbitrary transfer of their allegiance to an authority which was still alien, remote, and misunderstood. So the more adequate punishment of Riel and Lepine for the execution of Scott could have been very easily accomplished. But the Government of Sir John Macdonald was

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hampered by party considerations, and unwilling to estrange Quebec by the adoption of prompt and stern measures against the insurgents, or even by too ready submission to the vehement clamour of the English-speaking provinces. When it is remembered that Riel was sent out of the country by arrangement between Archbishop Taché and Sir John Macdonald, and that Lepine was the beneficiary of a similar arrangement between the Archbishop and Sir George Cartier, and that both were maintained abroad upon funds supplied by Cartier and Macdonald, an element of comedy is introduced into a series of events which in other respects are grave and sombre enough.¹ The record, as Mr. Laurier said, is indelibly stained by the blood of Scott, but outside of that wanton and brutal murder, the Red River settlers showed only the spirit of British freemen, and contended only for those rights and privileges which no race of men worth foothold in the earth have ever tamely surrendered.

¹ On December 27th, 1871, Sir John Macdonald addressed a letter to Archbishop Taché, marked "private and strictly confidential," in which he said, "I have been able to make the arrangement for the individual that we have talked about. I now send you a sight draft on the Bank of Montreal for \$1,000. I need not press upon your Grace the importance of the money being paid to him periodically (say monthly or quarterly), and not in a lump, otherwise the money would be wasted, and our embarrassment begin again. The payment should spread over a year." In his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee, Archbishop Taché said that he had received a letter from Sir George Cartier in which an allusion was made to the draft which had been sent him by Sir John Macdonald, and stating that it would be advisable that Lepine should leave also. He then saw Lieutenant-Governor Archibald

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The Red River insurrection was not provoked by deliberate intention to ignore the rights, or even the susceptibilities of the French settlers, but by the premature action, the blunders and misadventures, which marked the final steps of the negotiations for the incorporation of the West into the Canadian Confederation. As Lord Lisgar said in the last speech which he delivered as Governor-General of Canada: "The troubles which ensued in Manitoba were due rather to misunderstanding and misapprehension, arising from ignorance, than to any rooted policy. They were overcome by steadiness, patient explanation, and the occasional display of an adequate armed force to sustain civil authority."¹ It cannot be said that Riel was worthy of his position of leadership. But it often happens that men of just such intemperate zeal and vagrant impulse seize the direction of sudden enterprises, and take on something of the dignity and consequence of events which are long shaping, and at last spring spontaneously from ripened conditions. He is not a figure that history will put among its gods, or that on the question of money. The Lieutenant-Governor and the Archbishop called on Mr. Donald A. Smith, and Mr. Smith furnished £600 sterling on the understanding that he would be re-imbursed by the Canadian Government. The Archbishop added to the amount from the \$1,000 previously provided, \$200, and thus made up \$1,600 each for Riel and Lepine, which he gave them in accordance with their demand, to enable them to go and live outside the Territory. The remainder of the \$1,000 he kept in the bank, to be used as required for the support of their families.

¹ Speech at Montreal, January 20th, 1872.

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democracy will deify in other generations, however the patient, deep-searching historian may esteem the events with which his name must always be associated.

It is worth while to look still more closely into the objects and achievements of the Canada First party. The movement set deep marks upon the politics of Canada, and its story forms a more significant chapter in our history than any historian has yet recognized. Foster's fame does not rest upon the inflammatory articles in the *Daily Telegraph*, nor even upon his energetic management of public opinion in Ontario during the crisis of the Red River insurrection. He has left some admirable literary remnants and some political documents of distinct and permanent value. In 1871 he sent out an inspiring and scholarly address which stands as the truest interpretation of the aims of this group of patriots, and the best expression of the hopes and aspirations which were then moving in the breasts of the younger and more ambitious citizens of the new Confederation. Foster said in the course of this sagacious and eloquent deliverance: "Let but our statesmen do their duty, with the consciousness that all the elements which constitute greatness are now awaiting a closer combination; that all the requirements of a higher national life are here available for use; that nations do not spring Minerva-like into existence; that strength and weakness are relative terms, a few not

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being necessarily weak because they are few, nor a multitude necessarily strong because they are many; that hesitating, doubting, fearing, whining over supposed or even actual weakness, and conjuring up possible dangers, is not the true way to strengthen the foundations of our Dominion, or to give confidence in its continuance. Let each of us have faith in the rest, and cultivate a broad feeling of regard for mutual welfare, as becomes those who are building up a fabric that is destined to endure. Thus stimulated and thus strengthened by a common belief in a glorious future, and with a common watchword to give unity to thought and power to endeavour, we shall attain the fruition of our cherished hopes, and give our beloved country a proud position among the nations of the earth."¹ This teaching is still necessary in Canada, and was doubly so in the infancy of Confederation, when the flame of national sentiment burned low, when sectionalism was rife and faction strong and relentless, when the hearts of many failed them for fear, and all the good promise of the Commonwealth was obscured by the difficulties and perplexities of the immediate hour, and the half-conscious apprehension of the formidable tasks of the future.

During four or five eventful years Canada First thrived, and from time to time the pioneers were

¹ Canada First; a Memorial of the Late W. A. Foster, Q.C., pages 46, 47.

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joined by other young Canadians of like eager spirit and single minded purpose to foster national sentiment, and establish faith and pride in the new institutions and the new conditions. Among these might be mentioned William H. Howland, Thomas Moss, W. G. McWilliams, Hugh Blain, W. B. McMurrich, J. K. Macdonald, Frederick Fenton, G. W. Badgerow, C. R. W. Biggar, James R. Roaf, A. S. Irving, A. M. Rosebrugh, W. T. O'Reilly, James H. Morris, Frank McKelcan, and James H. Coyne. It is said that the motto, "Canada First" was evolved from a suggestion made by J. D. Edgar; and it is likely that the spirit of protectionism, which was to find expression in the formal platform adopted in 1874, represented the increasing influence of W. H. Howland in the councils of the movement. In the autumn of 1873, Thomas Moss became the Liberal candidate for West Toronto for the House of Commons, and the Canada First group, while declining identification with the Liberal party, gave Moss a hearty support, and greatly assisted in securing his election. His declaration, "Canada before any party; the country before any faction," breathed the very spirit of the movement.

In 1874, the Canadian National Association was formed and the National Club of Toronto established. Mr. W. H. Howland was the president of the new Association, and Mr. W. G. McWilliams its secretary, while Mr. Goldwin Smith

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was the first president of the National Club. The platform of the Association embraced:—(1) British connection, consolidation of the Empire, and in the meantime a voice in treaties affecting Canada; (2) closer trade relations with the British West India Islands, with a view to ultimate political connection; (3) an income franchise; (4) the ballot, with the addition of compulsory voting; (5) a scheme for the representation of minorities; (6) encouragement of immigration and free homesteads in the public domain; (7) the imposition of duties for revenue so adjusted as to afford every possible encouragement to native industry; (8) an improved militia system under command of trained Dominion officers; (9) no property qualifications in members of the House of Commons; (10) reorganization of the Senate; (11) pure and economic administration of public affairs.

It is interesting, and perhaps not unprofitable, to compare this platform with the programme announced in 1872 by a body of Quebec *Rouges*. The *Rouge* platform also contained eleven planks, and while more radical in its minor features, shows less breadth and less faith than that of the National Association of Ontario. The *Rouges* demanded: (1) Election of Senators by the people or by the Local Legislatures; (2) reform of the electoral laws; (3) reduction of the number of ministers; (4) diminution of the Governor-General's salary; (5) reduction of the number of public employees;

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(6) reorganization of the militia by taking for basis the maintenance of internal order ; (7) amelioration of the means of communication so as to induce the commerce of the West to take the way of the St. Lawrence ; (8) postponement of the construction of the Pacific railway until the North-West was sufficiently colonized ; (9) the absolute right of regulating our own commercial relations with other countries in such a way as to insure the establishment of manufactures in Canada ; (10) development of the resources of each of the provinces composing the Confederation ; (11) protection to home industry. It was once attempted in the House of Commons to bind Mr. Laurier by this programme of 1872. But he declared that it had never received his sanction, and that he could not adopt some of its provisions.

There probably was more complete sympathy between the Canada First party and the Quebec *Rouges* than the platform of the National Association would suggest. While the platform spoke for British connection and consolidation of the Empire, some of its influential spokesmen undoubtedly looked to ultimate political separation, and to the independence of Canada. Denison and Foster made the platform, but Goldwin Smith and Howland had small reverence for either the letter or the spirit of its provisions. Its growing toleration for independence, and Mr. Goldwin Smith's active identification with its propaganda, explain *The*

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Globe's uncompromising opposition to the movement. Doubtless *The Globe* was also concerned to maintain its own authority and to avert disruption of the Reform party, while Mr. Goldwin Smith was impatient of authority, and most of all of the authority of George Brown, careless of the disruption of parties, and a willing patron of political and intellectual revolt. Mr. Goldwin Smith in England belonged to that school of publicists which desired to set the colonies adrift. Here he consorted with the Canada First group, but rejected the policy of Imperial Federation. As he said himself, at a National Club dinner in 1874, he could club with Imperial Confederationists, but could not agree with them in opinion. He stated his attitude clearly in a letter which he addressed to *The Globe* on November 5th, 1874. He there explained that he looked to gradual emancipation as the natural end of the colonial system. "Gradual emancipation," he said, "means nothing more than the gradual concession by the mother country to the colonies of powers of self-government. This process has already been carried far. Should it be carried further, and ultimately consummated, as I frankly avow my belief it must, the mode of proceeding will be the same that it has always been. Each step will be an act of Parliament passed with the assent of the Crown. As to the filial tie between Canada and England, I hope it will endure forever." These views were undoubtedly held by other adherents of

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the Canada First movement, notwithstanding the platform declaration for consolidation of the Empire, and hence *The Globe's* denunciation of the party as a nursery of independence sentiment, and a camping ground for annexationists. The Imperialists, however, were the dominant factor when they chose to show their strength, and their zeal far outlasted that of the less aggressive and less outspoken wing of Independents.

Among the names most dearly cherished by the Canada First party was that of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, while its best hopes for the future were centred in Edward Blake.¹ Perhaps the fear that Mr. Blake's sympathies would be alienated from the Liberal party through association with the new propaganda gave a still keener edge to *The Globe's* hostility to the movement. There was ground for its apprehension, and reason for the high hopes of Canada First. Mr. Blake's celebrated speech at Aurora, on October 3rd, 1874, is substantially a presentation and elaboration of the platform of the Canadian National Association. He there spoke for federation of the Empire, for reorganization of the Senate, for compulsory voting, for extension of the franchise, and for representation of minorities. He said it was impossible to foster a national spirit unless we had national interests to attend to, or among people who did not choose to undertake the

¹ See Mr. Goldwin Smith's introduction to the Foster Memorial Volume.

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responsibilities, and to devote themselves to the duties to which national attributes belong. He described the Canadian people as "four millions of Britons who are not free," argued that by the policy of England in which we had no voice or control, Canada might be plunged into the horrors of war, and pointed out that without our knowledge or consent the navigation of the St. Lawrence had just been ceded forever to the United States. He believed, therefore, that an effort should be made to reorganize the Empire upon a federal basis, and that the people of Canada should have some greater share of control in the management of its foreign affairs.¹

This speech was not well received by the chief journals of either of the great political parties. *The Globe* saw in the speech a platform which was not yet within the field of practical politics, and which menaced the cohesion and stability of the Liberal

¹ In a speech at a Reform banquet in Montreal in January, 1873, Mr. Blake said: "He believed that the discussions upon the Washington Treaty, and the feeling with respect to it both here and in the mother country, in reference to the general colonial question, would tend—and perhaps in that case good might come out of evil—to some solution calculated to perpetuate what we all desired—the intimate union of the British Empire. He did not believe that Canada would be long prepared to have her interests disposed of without her having a voice in the disposal of them. And he did not believe that she was prepared to say that the mode in which she was to acquire that voice was by a disruption of the Empire. We looked to a brighter future—to the reorganization of the Empire on another basis, which would open to us a wider and higher destiny as a member of the great British Empire."

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party. *The Mail* and other Conservative journals exploited the speech to aggravate and exaggerate differences within the Reform party, and to make an open quarrel between Mr. Blake and Mr. Brown.

In this they did not quite succeed, but if at any time the relations between Brown and Blake were not satisfactory, it was during this period. *The Nation*, a weekly journal, to which W. A. Foster, Charles Lindsey, W. J. Rattray and Goldwin Smith, a corps of keen and practised writers, contributed, hailed Mr. Blake as the evangel of a new political gospel, and a few months later, the Camerons, of the *London Advertiser*, established at Toronto a new daily journal under the name of *The Liberal*, which during its short and brilliant career of five months was in intimate touch with Mr. Blake, Mr. Thomas Moss, and Mr. David Mills, at steady enmity with *The Globe*, and under direct inspiration of the advocates of the Aurora platform. But the brilliant dawn was soon cast in shadow, and leader and organ quickly fell away. In May, 1875, Mr. Blake re-entered the Mackenzie Government, *The Liberal* was suspended, and the National Association ceased to be an active, or at least an organized factor in the public life of the country. Mr. Blake has recanted his pronouncement for federation of the Empire. Mr. Goldwin Smith is in strange company when he consorts with his political associates of a quarter of a century ago. Foster, of fragrant memory, sleeps while his work goes on, and

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his message voices with distincter utterance the common faith of the Canadian people. The National Club lives and thrives, loyal to the Imperial sympathies, and devoted to the Imperial aspirations of its founders, and a strong citadel of Canadian national sentiment. Colonel Denison, too, unchanged and unchangeable, carrying a green youth into a serene age, treading the way of his loyalist forefathers, proclaiming a united Canada and a united Empire, aggressive, independent and public-spirited, has never ceased in the work to which he dedicated himself so many years ago, and though he has not sat in the councils of the State, nor worn the decorations which have fallen to men of less desert and smaller service, has yet greatly fashioned the ideals of the Canadian people, and powerfully influenced the course of public policy in British America. The dying struggles of Canada First were the birth-pangs of the National Policy.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE MACKENZIE ADMINISTRATION

THE year 1876 witnessed the definite adoption of protection as the fiscal policy of the Conservative party. The idea came with an alluring name, and under circumstances signally favourable to its rapid growth and ready acceptance by the masses of the people. The country lay under the heavy hand of commercial depression. Wages were low, factories idle, mercantile houses trembling on the verge of collapse, the farmers' profits reduced by stagnant markets at home and low prices abroad. In the United States, as in Great Britain, conditions were at least as bad as in Canada. A stream of surplus goods poured across the border and choked the natural markets of Canadian manufacturers. In four years the total volume of trade fell from \$217,000,000 to \$172,000,000. The annual deficit in the national finances ranged from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000. This was an inviting situation for politicians out of office, and a positive elysium for commercial theorists and political agents of industrial panaceas. Bad times greatly increase popular faith in the efficacy of Acts of Parliament, and incline even conservative communities to revolutionary political experiments.

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There seems to be quite conclusive evidence that Sir John Macdonald was not a protectionist. Mr. W. F. Maclean, M.P., in a spirited and illuminative sketch of the Conservative leader, has said that he was "timid unto death of protection," that he "had to be bullied into it, led into it, committed to it by others," and that "when he thought it grown, he used it as a bridge to reach the power he liked to wield."¹ Mr. Maclean had close relations with some of the chief writers of the protectionist campaign, and may be assumed to speak with knowledge. The late Nicholas Flood Davin, in one of the last letters he wrote from the Press Gallery of the House of Commons, quoted words of protest used by Sir John Macdonald against an article in *The Mail* which seemed to commit the Conservative party to the policy of protection. Similar evidence has been furnished by Mr. Goldwin Smith, who during these years was on terms of personal and political intimacy with the Conservative leader. Mr. Goldwin Smith has said that shortly before the election of 1878, he called Sir John Macdonald's attention to the fact that some of his supporters were holding protectionist language, and ventured to point out that, while the United States with its vast and varied area of production, and its immense home market, might not suffer so much from the system, protection would never do for Canada. "No," was Sir John Macdonald's reply,

¹ *Canadian Magazine*, January, 1895.

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“and you need not fear that I am going to get into that hole.” When he ultimately adopted protection, Mr. Goldwin Smith rallied him on his conversion, and his answer was that “protection had done so much for him that he had to do something for protection.”¹ There has been an attempt to show that Sir John Macdonald was a protectionist as far back as 1859, when the Galt tariff, against which British manufacturers and the Imperial Government protested, was adopted. But that was a tariff of 15 per cent., according to Galt’s own estimate of $13\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and we know that in 1874, when the duties were raised from 15 to $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by the Mackenzie Government, the increase was attacked by the Conservative Opposition in Parliament as the thin edge of the wedge of protection. In fact, it is well understood that the course of events drove on the Conservative leader to its advocacy, and that political, rather than economic considerations were the determining factor in his conversion.²

Up to this time there were protectionists in both

¹ Letter to the *Toronto Globe*, September 23rd, 1895.

² Mr. D’Alton McCarthy, in a speech at St. Mary’s, on October 22nd, 1893, said: “No doubt in the world that we were out of power, and by going in for the N. P., and taking the wind out of Mr. Mackenzie’s sails we got into power. We became identified with the protection policy, and if Mr. Mackenzie had adopted the protective policy we should have been free traders. I am willing to make this confession: if Mr. Mackenzie had been a protectionist there would have been nothing left for us but to be free traders.”

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political parties, and the movement to which Sir John Macdonald finally adhered, was of commercial rather than of party origin. Many influential Liberals were among the group of manufacturers who forced the issue into Canadian politics, and for a time it was by no means certain that the Government would not recognize the growing force of protectionist opinion and propose a substantial increase in customs duties. In fact, as was said elsewhere, the Government had determined to raise the general scale of duties from $17\frac{1}{2}$ to 20 per cent. but yielded to the representations of Maritime Liberals that such increase would be fatal to ministerial candidates in the Eastern Provinces. There seemed every reason to believe that free trade sentiment was deeply rooted in the eastern communities, and it will be remembered that one of the favourite arguments of opponents of Confederation was that the creation of federal institutions and the necessity of great public works for the purposes of inter-provincial trade and general national intercourse, would require a heavy increase of customs taxation in order to provide the large revenues necessary to meet the demands upon the federal treasury. These prophecies seemed now to be in process of fulfilment, and ministers from the Atlantic Provinces offered a determined resistance to any increase in the scale of duties. It is interesting in this connection to remember that at the general election which followed, nearly two thirds of the Mari-

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time constituencies were carried by the candidates of Sir John Macdonald.¹

Many of Mr. Mackenzie's supporters from Ontario and Quebec knew the feeling of the people and foresaw disaster to the Liberal party as a consequence of the Government's immovable adherence to low tariff. But they were in a minority in the ministerial caucus, or at least were overborne by the eastern contingent, and reluctantly surrendered the advantage of position to the Conservative leaders. As between a tariff of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and duties of 20 per cent., or even of $22\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., no serious question of principle was involved. It could be fairly argued that the necessities of revenue demanded an increase of customs taxation. A moderate increase of customs duties would probably have conciliated public opinion and prolonged the existence of an exceptionally economical and efficient Administration. If it be held that there is some peculiar and particular sanctity in a tariff of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., then it was well to adhere to the position and stake the fate of the Government on a scale of duties insufficient to meet the ordinary demands upon the revenue, and inadequate to provide for the public works and public services which a growing country demanded. The object of a revenue tariff is to provide revenue, and incidental

¹ The protectionists carried fourteen out of the twenty-one seats in Nova Scotia, five out of the six seats in Prince Edward Island, and five out of the seventeen seats in New Brunswick.

protection is necessarily involved. The object of a protective tariff is to afford protection to home products and native industries, with revenue as the secondary consideration. It is just as rational to argue that a protective tariff may not fall below 50 per cent. as to contend that a revenue tariff may not rise above $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The protectionist campaign, however, derived much of its force from the formidable influx of American manufactures, the destructive effects of this competition upon Canadian industries, and the undoubted fact that owing to the bad conditions of trade in the United States, the surplus goods of American factories were sold in the Canadian market at sacrifice prices.

It is, perhaps, surprising that a serious movement for protection did not arise sooner in Canada. We shall probably find the reason in the reluctance of Canada to increase the taxation on British imports, and in the abiding hope of a renewal of reciprocal trade relations with the adjoining country. If the United States had not abrogated the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, Canada would hardly have adopted the system of protection. If Congress had ratified the treaty negotiated by Sir Edward Thornton and the Hon. George Brown in 1874, the election of 1878 would probably have turned upon other issues. But the statesmen at Washington were manifestly determined to maintain a policy which bore heavily upon Canada, and in the bitter season of depression through which the country was

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passing, Sir John Macdonald's demand for reciprocity of trade or reciprocity of tariffs exactly gauged the temper of the Canadian people. It was vain, of course, to think that Canada could coerce the United States, but an increase of duties against the Republic seemed at least an assertion of fiscal independence, and a manifestation of Canadian spirit in the face of an aggressive and powerful trade rival. The argument may not sound well to students of economics, but it touched the sentiment and the prejudices of the people, and was deftly and assiduously advanced by the Conservative leaders and the organized protectionists.

National resentment and industrial depression constitute a formidable political partnership. The very term which the Conservative party adopted as the synonym for protection, seemed to suggest that the prevailing commercial distress was due to some lack of national spirit in the Administration. Mr. Laurier was not much deceived as to the temper of the country, although he was not convinced that an increase in duties was necessary, and was frankly hostile to any such system of extreme protection as was illustrated by the policy of the United States. He spoke in the House on March 10th, 1876, on a motion by Sir John Macdonald demanding such a readjustment of the tariff as would aid in alleviating the stagnation of business, and "afford fitting encouragement and protection to the struggling manufactures and industries as well as to the

agricultural products of the country." In this speech Mr. Laurier said he would not deny that he had been "a moderate protectionist." He would not, however, admit that the question was one of Free Trade versus Protection. It was not a fact that free trade was a Liberal principle and protection a Conservative principle. It was purely and strictly a question of social economy. He pointed out that while in Great Britain free trade was carried through political action, and was opposed by the Conservative leaders, still when the new commereial policy was put into operation, and its beneficent results experienced, the Conservative party forsook its old prejudices and became like the Liberals a unit for the free trade system. In France the Liberal party was divided on the question. Thiers was a protectionist, and Gambetta and Say were free traders. He would not undertake to define the position of the Conservatives of France. He had the notion that, like the great body of the Conservatives of Lower Canada, "they chiefly concerned themselves about saving their own souls and cursing the souls of other people." In the United States the Conservative or Democratic party stood for free trade, while the Republican or Liberal party was intensely protectionist. In Canada the Liberal party was by no means a unit for free trade, and he had only just discovered that the Conservatives had a policy on the question. He proceeded: "If the view of the subject that free

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trade must be the ultimate policy of any nation be taken, it yet cannot be denied that protection is a matter of necessity for a young nation in order that it may attain the full development of its own resources." He thought that free trade or protection must be applied according to the necessities of a country. "The most obstinate Conservative must admit that freedom is the natural condition of trade, and the most obstinate Liberal must also allow that, though it would never do to build a Chinese wall around the country in order to cut us off from the outside world, yet sometimes it is both wise and prudent to establish on our frontiers a few detached forts to protect our territory against foreign invasion."

He said further, that if he were in Great Britain he would avow free trade, but as a Canadian, born and resident in the country, he had to conclude that we required a measure of protection. He went on to argue that protection meant taxation, and was the price a young and vigorous nation must pay for its development. He was, however, opposed to any increase in the existing tariff, and would not admit that the economic policy of the country was responsible for the depression which prevailed. The 17½ per cent. tariff gave the Canadian manufacturer protection against foreign competition. Besides, against the English manufacturer he had the difference in freights in his favour, and against the American competitor he had the difference in the

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price of labour.¹ "The depression," he said "is not particular to this country, but is universal, and affects highly protected as well as free trade countries." In the United States they had a high tariff, but were suffering even worse than we in Canada, and the remedy there proposed was a decrease in duties. It would be unwise to legislate to meet exceptional circumstances, and the fact that the country, under normal conditions, was satisfied with a moderate tariff was evidence that that was a satisfactory and beneficial policy. At any rate, he would not vote to declare that every article of consumption in the Dominion should be taxed.²

Mr. Laurier made no other important speech during the session of 1876. In fact, outside this contribution to the tariff debate, his name scarcely appears in Hansard. In the session of 1877 he was more active, and again his most important speech was devoted to tariff issues. It is in the main a re-statement of the position he took in the previous session, supported by fresh illustrations, and buttressed with new arguments. It was in this speech that he described Papineau as a protectionist, not

¹ "A fifteen per cent. tariff means more than fifteen per cent. protection to manufacturers. There is the cost of transport of goods from the other side of the water, which amounts, on an average, to at least five per cent., so that there is now a protection equal to twenty per cent. That ought to be sufficient for any industry suited to the country; and, as to others, it would be unwise to attempt to sustain them by fiscal props."—Mr. Thomas White, before the Dominion Board of Trade in 1873.

² Hansard, 1876, pages 589, 592.

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so much on grounds of political economy as from political reasons. He reminded his opponents who charged the French Liberals with inconsistency, that in the time of Papineau they were struggling for responsible government and a larger measure of political liberty. But they had received "most ample justice, and the most complete liberty, and the result was that in all this vast empire there were no people more attached to British institutions than French-Canadians." As a young man Mr. Laurier was manifestly impressed by the economic rather than by the separatist notions of Papineau, and in this speech he practically reaffirmed his conviction of the wisdom of a policy of moderate protection for Canada. There were some industries, he argued, which could not be established without the aid of legislative action. He was quite frank and straightforward. "I say this openly and in the face of my own political friends," is the language of Hansard. He was still convinced, however, that a tariff of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. gave sufficient advantage to home manufactures, that excessive protection would be bad for the consumer and ultimately bad for the industries, and that no good result could accrue from a policy of retaliation against the United States.¹

The freedom with which Mr. Laurier had discussed some disturbing questions in the Quebec Legislature subjected him to frequent attack by the

¹ Hansard, March 22nd, 1877, pages 920, 924.

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Conservative press of his province, and was not overlooked by his opponents in the House of Commons. For example, during the tariff debate of this session, Mr. A. P. Caron charged Mr. Laurier with saying that the French-Canadians were inferior to other races so far as commerce and manufactures were concerned. The only foundation for the statement was that Mr. Laurier had attacked the educational system of the province, and he now told Mr. Caron that if he were still in the Legislature he would continue the agitation for educational reform.¹ He made a characteristic observation during a discussion as to whether or not prayers in the House should be read in both French and English. Mr. Hector L. Langevin had said he was not willing that French members should waive their rights, and would insist that the prayers should be read in French. Mr. Laurier observed that "no rights were involved in the question. It was simply a matter of reverence and decorum. The Divinity could be invoked as well in the English language as in the French."²

Towards the end of this session he had a somewhat ungracious task to perform. He learned that the firm with which Mr. J. M. Currier, member for Ottawa, was connected, had had contracts to supply lumber to the St. Vincent de Paul Penitentiary and to the Public Works Department,

¹ Hansard, 1877, page 952.

² Hansard, 1877, page 94.

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and having profited by the contracts, had thus violated the Act for the Preservation of the Independence of Parliament. It does not seem that any particular guilt attached to Mr. Currier. He was not an active partner in the firm which had the contracts, and recognizing at once the impropriety of the position he resigned his seat in Parliament. Mr. Laurier made the charges with admirable moderation, and while showing necessary firmness, acquitted Mr. Currier of deliberate wrong-doing, and gave a manly tone and a large spirit to the whole incident.¹ But Liberals were facing the enforced resignation of Mr. James Norris, of Lincoln, and of the Hon. T. W. Anglin, of Gloucester, N.B., Speaker of the House, for just such an unconscious impropriety as was now brought home to the Conservative member for Ottawa, and they possibly found consolation and compensation in Mr. Currier's experience.

In caucus and in general association with his parliamentary colleagues, Mr. Laurier grew steadily in influence and in popularity. He kept his ambition well in hand, eschewed all self-advertising, avoided the fatal fault of much speaking, and exhibited under all circumstances a simple dignity and an excellent discretion. No man could have done less to impose himself upon the country, or to secure the recognition of the political leaders with whom he acted. He refused to lobby for personal preferment, and he would have held very cheaply any

¹ Hansard, 1877, pages 1482 and 1515.

honour which came as the result of solicitation or of intrigue. He simply revealed himself at his best in Parliament and in the councils of his party, and was content to make no self-valuation of his claims, and send out no advertisement of his ambitions. But almost from the moment that he set foot in the House of Commons it was recognized that he was the natural leader of the Liberals of Quebec, and that sound party policy would require his early admission to the Cabinet. Two years before he joined the Ministry, the Hon. George Brown had counselled Mr. Mackenzie to advance to Cabinet rank "the young, vigorous, popular and eloquent man of the present moment." Mr. Brown said: "A new fresh man is more in harmony with the spirit of your Government than any other. His elevation would be hailed by all his young compatriots, and he has no antecedents to fetter his action. Of course, I speak entirely from what I have heard from you and others as to Laurier, for I have not the advantage of knowing him personally."¹

It was equally apparent to the Opposition that Mr. Laurier must soon take office. Now and then a gibe to that effect was thrown across the floor of the Chamber. They saw, in the phrase of Mr. Caron, that "his seat was gradually approaching the treasury benches." The opportunity for his admission to the Cabinet came in the autumn of 1877, when Mr. Cauchon was appointed Lieu-

¹ Buckingham-Ross, "Life of Alexander Mackenzie," page 440.

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tenant-Governor of Manitoba, in succession to the Hon. Alex. Morris. Mr. Cauchon brought no strength to the Liberal Administration, and the reasons which led Mr. Mackenzie to include him in the Cabinet have never been well understood. He was a man of amiable character and of genial personal qualities, but as a provincial Minister he had trafficked in public contracts for direct personal gain; and when one recalls the chief issue on which Mr. Mackenzie carried the country, it is strange that he should have coalesced with this discredited politician. If it was hoped that, as a recreant Conservative, Cauchon would divide the Conservatives of Quebec and bring fresh support to the Administration, the expectation was not realized, while the elevation of a convicted mercenary to the authority of leadership over the Liberals of Quebec was resented by the best element of the old *Rouge* party. Cauchon was attacked with exceptional vigour and persistency by the organs and speakers of the Opposition throughout the whole term of his connection with the Ministry, and their indignation was not even quieted when he accepted the Lieutenant-Governorship. There is no doubt that their relentless pursuit of their old ally had some effect on public opinion, and many Liberals rejoiced when he withdrew from the Government. It may be that much of this indignation was simulated. Never was a Government more bitterly and more unsparingly denounced than that of Mr. Mackenzie, and never,

perhaps, have we had a set of Ministers in Canada who less deserved the merciless treatment they received at the hands of their political opponents. But the vulnerability of Cauchon prejudiced the whole Administration, and greatly impaired its power to resist the meaner and more extravagant charges of its opponents.

Mr. Laurier succeeded Mr. Cauchon in the Government, and was assigned the portfolio of Inland Revenue. His appointment took effect on October 8th, but the press announcements had anticipated the event. The *Toronto Globe* of October 6th had a sympathetic and favourable estimate of the new Minister. "Mr. Laurier," said the writer, "will prove a decided accession to the Ministry, and his presence in the Cabinet will be welcomed by all the English-speaking Reformers, as well as by the Liberals amongst his own compatriots. His influence among the latter has long been admitted, and the former have come to recognize him as one of the rising members of the party to which he belongs. Whatever differences may once have existed between the Reformers of Ontario and those of Quebec, no trace of them is to be found in the utterances of Mr. Laurier. This harmony, which in his case is perfect, exists also, we believe, between those who act with him and their fellow Liberals of the West, and, therefore, it was eminently appropriate that as a representative member of his party he should be invited to

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assume a position which he is otherwise well-qualified to fill. He is an elegant speaker and ready debater; he has shown that he is possessed of that capacity to master details which is so essential to a successful administrator, and he is unquestionably endowed with what is of equal importance in a statesman, breadth of view and a thorough mastery of political principles." The article went on to say that Mr. Laurier was very popular in his own locality, and that if opposed at all he would be re-elected by a large majority.

The Toronto *Mail* of October 9th dealt with Mr. Laurier's elevation to the Cabinet, and indicated that he would be strongly opposed in his constituency. Its references to the Government were bitter and intemperate; its references to the new Minister not ungenerous. "Personally," *The Mail* said, "Mr. Laurier has so far made but few enemies. His *début* in the House of Commons as a speaker was a success. He has earned a reputation as a graceful and accomplished orator." It quite fairly added: "Should he fail as an administrator he will not be the first good speaker who has had no aptitude for the work of a department." "We simply say," *The Mail* continued, "that in those qualities which particularly make a man strong in Parliament he has yet to give proof of his strength." This was all fair enough, and there was too good reason for the apprehension which the next sentence expressed. "We shall be glad to learn that his somewhat delicate health will

not be a bar to his usefulness as a member of the Government." Finally, *The Mail* said: "We have no wish to see him out of Parliament, but we shall rejoice to see the county which he represents repudiate his entrance into the present corrupt and impotent Administration." The general tone of press comment, outside of the fanatical *Bleu* organs of Quebec, was considerate and generous, and it is nothing short of remarkable that in so few years of public life he should have won this far-reaching admiration for his character and far-reaching respect for his opinions. *The Globe* was led to express satisfaction that "Conservative orators and organs have at last found an opponent of whom, on personal grounds, they can speak no evil." It declared that "in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces, no less than in Quebec, his advent to office has been hailed as an event of no common significance, and his character has been apparently gauged at one and the same time by the people of all the provinces with one pleasing and satisfactory result." "Such a man," *The Globe* said, "would be listened to, not as a sentimentalist, nor a bigot, nor a partisan, but as a statesman. There can be no question as to the advantage of having such a representative of Quebec thought, feelings, and opinion in the Cabinet."

Very different was the tone of *La Minerve*. The French Conservative organ said that people were expecting too much of Mr. Laurier not to be disappointed. He could not maintain himself at the

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height to which he was being exalted.—“Mr. Laurier’s past does not warrant these exaggerated eulogies. It is not because a member of Parliament has made a very pretty academic speech that we must crown him as a great man. His friends are rendering him a bad service. They are making a pedestal for him which is too exalted. Mr. Laurier has up to the present time distinguished himself only by his speeches, and they contained only phrases more or less well constructed, but not a new idea. Now, one does not save a party with speeches or phrases. Mr. Laurier may have the material in him of a statesman, but his talent has not yet manifested itself. Up to the present time this talent has appeared to us superficial. He has never shown any depth.” It is interesting to contrast with this judgment of the leading French Conservative journal the utterance of the Montreal *Gazette*, then edited by Mr. Thomas White, and perhaps the most sober and sagacious of Conservative journals in Canada. *The Gazette* said: “Against Mr. Laurier personally we have nothing to say, and it is a pleasure, after having to deal with such men as Laflamme, and Huntington, and Cauchon, to realize that in the case of the new Minister the objection becomes wholly political. But as a public man he is, under the Constitution, bound to admit that the question before his constituents is not whether he is ‘a good fellow’ or not, but whether the policy of the Government for which, seeing that no change is

announced, he has assumed the entire responsibility, as much so as if he had been a member all the time, is such as deserves the support and confidence of the people."

Le National said: "After a stay of a year in Montreal, Mr. Laurier established himself in the county town of the county of Arthabaska. From that day his future was assured. Clients arrived as by enchantment, and he became the pet child of the people. His entrance into Parliament was only a question of time and opportunity. As a speaker, and as a scientific man, Mr. Laurier has attained a very high position in the federal Parliament. We admire his great facility of elocution, the elegance of his language, and the serious tone that he gives to discussion. These qualities have placed him side by side with Mr. Blake and Sir John Macdonald." *L'Union*, of St. Hyacinthe, with equal heartiness, said: "Mr. Laurier, the brilliant member for Arthabaska, is chosen to replace Mr. Cauchon in Mr. Mackenzie's Cabinet. The eulogies that the English papers and some Conservative papers have passed upon the new Minister, clearly demonstrate that he will be a respected and influential chief. His conduct as a Minister will be firm and liberal. The speeches that he has lately made indicate the course that he intends to follow. We are convinced that the true friends of the country will make haste to second with their efforts the one that the English have called the 'coming or rising man'!"

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All these various opinions and estimates are taken from journals more or less closely identified with one or other of the political parties. It is plain that the Liberal press had a great regard for the young Minister, while the considerate and even generous treatment he received from many of the Conservative journals is almost without parallel in the history of political controversy in Canada. The independent press was equally appreciative and eulogistic. For example, the writer of "Current Events" in the *Canadian Monthly*, said: "The new Minister of Inland Revenue, the Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, is in every way a valuable accession to the Cabinet. A young man, not yet 36 years of age, he has an amount of ability, coupled with a maturity of judgment, which marks him out as a leader of party. The address which he delivered last June before *Le Club Canadien* in Quebec has now acquired new significance; it is no longer the able utterance of a promising legislator, but must serve as the manifesto of the Quebec Liberals—the best expression of their matured opinions." The writer added: "Mr. Laurier, in his Quebec address, made light of the charge of inconsistency, and he was right in doing so. It is the parrot cry of those who are too obtuse to learn anything by experience, or too crass and stubborn to profit by it. The Liberal party of Quebec is distinctly national in its principles and aims, and it is, therefore, a great gain to the Administration to have secured the services of its young

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leader, from whose unquestionable force and vigour of mind, not less than from his oratorical power, Canada, and especially his compatriots of Quebec, have a right to expect great things in the future.”¹

Just as soon as he was sworn into the Cabinet, Mr. Laurier set out for Drummond and Arthabaska to enter upon the election campaign made necessary by his acceptance of office. The hope that he would be returned by acclamation was quickly dispelled. The Opposition made immediate preparations for a strenuous contest, proceeded to throw into the constituency workers and speakers from all over Quebec, and even drafted for service in this remote field a corps of their most active canvassing and organizing agents from the Province of Ontario. Mr. Laurier was left to fight the platform battle almost single-handed against a score of the best outside speakers the Conservative party could command, while his organization was by no means equal to that of his opponents. It was thought that his personal popularity would prevail against all odds, and that pride in his character and career, and satisfaction with his appointment to office would be more than a match for dull times and all the devices and efforts of his opponents. The Minister reached Arthabaskaville on October 9th, and was greeted with extraordinary demonstrations of esteem and good-will. Over two hundred carriages were in procession, the streets were decorated with

¹ *Canadian Monthly* for November, 1877.

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arches, and the trees hung with flags and bunting. In the presence of such enthusiasm, the defeat of the Minister seemed quite out of the question. But his opponents were not daunted. They redoubled their efforts to accomplish his overthrow, and showed astonishing resource and vigour in the prosecution of the campaign. In the private canvass, Mr. Laurier was subjected to a remarkable series of accusations and misrepresentations, while the platform attack was levelled against the Administration. It was sought to minimize the popularity of the Minister by fierce and vehement denunciation of the Government which he had entered. As it was put by the chief Conservative journal: "It is the Government, not Mr. Laurier, which is on trial in Drummond and Arthabaska, though, of course, you cannot prevent the Government receiving in a measure the advantage of whatever popularity Mr. Laurier may have in the constituency. It is because he has dared to take upon his shoulders the sins of the Administration, even to Mr. Mackenzie's coalition with Mr. Cauchon, and the latter's elevation to a Lieutenant-Governorship, that he finds such strong opposition to him on his return to his old constituency."

The main issue on the platform was the condition of the country; the main issue in the canvass the relations of Mr. Laurier and his party with the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics. For many years the Church authorities had given no quarter to Liberal

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candidates, and had almost strangled the Liberal party in Quebec. Occasion will be taken in another chapter to consider this issue, and to present Mr. Laurier's attitude in face of the bold and determined attempt of the bishops to destroy political liberalism and civil liberty in Lower Canada. In this particular contest, however, it was the emissaries of the Conservative party, rather than the agents of the bishops, who undertook to establish that Mr. Laurier was a bad Catholic, and that he and his party were under the direct censure of Rome. It was represented in the French parishes that Mr. Laurier had become a Protestant minister.¹ It was said he had demanded that priests should marry. It was declared in one of the campaign documents circulated by his opponents that he was the companion of "apostates of the Chiniquy breed," of "excommunicated persons," and of "friends of Guibord." He was denounced by at least one priest as a Liberal of the worst and most dangerous character, while a second curé sent out a letter for general distribution declaring that Mr. Bourbeau, the Minister's opponent, was "devoted to the interests of religion and had shown great patriotism on many occasions." Another campaign document undertook to interpret a pas-

¹ He had been represented as a Protestant minister; there was not one of the canvassers of the honourable gentlemen opposite that did not represent to the people that he was not a Minister of the Crown, but that he was a Protestant minister.—Mr. Laurier in the House of Commons, February 11th, 1878.

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toral letter which had just been issued at the instance of the authorities at Rome and in response to the appeal of Liberal Catholics, as meaning the reverse of what its language implied. The effect of this pastoral letter was to declare that no pontifical decree existed condemning any political party, and therefore, to set Catholics free to vote for Liberal candidates. But the clerical campaign document had more specific knowledge of the mind of Rome, and the judgment of the hierarchy. It said: "This does not mean that the Liberal party is not condemned because of its bad doctrines, or does not deserve to be condemned. It merely shows that the Church in its wisdom and prudence does not wish to point out by name any person, class, or party." But "this party, or at least the leaders, are certainly under the weight of the clauses condemning Liberalism." These men, it was further claimed, were "Liberals of the worst kind," and Mr. Laurier and Mr. Laflamme were specifically named as standing under the direct censure of the Church. It was also charged against Mr. Laurier, as he said in a speech in the House during the next session, that when a youth of twenty he had joined an association whose members were sworn to "crush out the English race from the American continent."¹ The Irish Catholics of the constituency were told that he had become an Orangeman, and the French-speaking electors that he was a Presbyterian. Altogether

¹ Hansard, 1878, page 56.

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it was a remarkably resourceful campaign on the part of the Minister's opponents, and the result proved that it was as effective as it was remarkable. When the polls closed on October 27th, he was found to be in a minority of 29, where he had had a majority of 238 at the general election. The result was received by the Conservative press and party with a roar of exultation, while the Liberal party felt the blow from one end of the country to the other, and looked with gloom and apprehension to the future.

It was a bad defeat for the Administration, and a bad defeat for the Minister. It was probably the sorest blow that has been dealt to Mr. Laurier during all his public career, and he did not disguise the fact that he was hit hard and that he understood the full significance of the incident. He was beaten in his own home, beaten just as he had accepted office, and beaten by the men of his own race and faith; and in all three facts he found cause for unaffected regret and disappointment. It is said that old Liberals in Drummond and Arthabaska, who were so confident of his election that they did not even go to the polls, wept when they learned the result. In the English portions of the constituency he ran very strong and gained heavily on the vote he had polled three years before. As *The Mail* said, "The English vote went heavily for the new Minister." The causes of his defeat were actively canvassed by the press of the country, but in the main their

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judgments simply represented party opinion. The Liberal journals of Montreal, French and English, ascribed the result to the active intervention of the Quebec Government, and to the interference of the local clergy in defiance of the pastoral of the bishops. The Montreal *Star* argued that the Conservative victory was due to the determination of the people to pass censure upon Mr. Mackenzie for taking Mr. Cauchon into his Cabinet. The Ottawa correspondent of *The Mail* wrote: "No stronger man than Mr. Laurier in the Province of Quebec could be found to contest the constituency. It was a Grit stronghold. Mr. Laurier in a short time has made a brilliant record. He had ingratiated himself into the affections of the English-speaking party, and secured at least two hundred Conservative votes on this occasion; in fact, he appealed to the electors with everything in his favour, and has apparently been beaten, not because of his own, but rather the utter unpopularity of the Government of which in an evil hour he consented to become a member." The Montreal *Gazette* said: "No man ever appealed to a constituency personally better qualified than did the Minister of Inland Revenue. His personal respectability is admitted on all hands, and he certainly has no reason to complain that this has in any way been questioned. His ability is acknowledged by his opponents as well as by his friends. He had just assumed a position of quasi-leadership, inaugurating his acceptance of that

position by an address which was avowedly intended to mark out the policy of the Liberal party for the future." "It was not," said the *Gazette*, "Mr. Laurier, the polished gentleman and skilful debater, who was appealing to the constituency; it was the Minister of Inland Revenue in Mr. Mackenzie's Government."

There were the usual charges of bribery made against the agents of the Ministerial candidate. It was likewise alleged, that in the French districts, Mr. Bourbeau was represented to have the support of the Orangemen, and that Mr. Huntington's celebrated speech in the county of Argenteuil, inviting the English-speaking people of Quebec to unite with the Liberal party in order to overcome the effects of clerical coercion in behalf of the candidates of the Conservative party, was circulated among the English-speaking electors of the division in the interests of Mr. Laurier. There seems to have been small basis for any of these charges, and at any rate, in these particulars, the Liberals were hopelessly outclassed by their opponents. There was neither a free use of money by the Liberals, nor any organized appeal to race or creed considerations. On the other hand, there was some justification for *The Globe's* vigorous denunciation of the methods to which his opponents resorted. Two or three days after the election that paper said: "It is evident from the documents circulated in the interests of the opposition candidate,

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no less than from the well-known characters of the men who supported Mr. Bourbeau, that the grand objection to Mr. Laurier, and the intense anxiety to defeat him, had their origin in that bigotry to which the very name of Liberalism acts as fuel to fire. It is a sentiment quite outside of and distinct from the faith these men profess; it has been repudiated and discountenanced by the authorities they are assumed most to respect; it would be fatal to the liberties of any people that acknowledged it." "Mr. Laurier," *The Globe* said, "dares in secular matters to exercise the simplest and most necessary rights of citizenship, he dares to be a Liberal in politics, to be a member of a Liberal Government, to insist on the right of free judgment; he maintains his views and opinions with distinguished ability; he is capable not only of following, but of leading in the Liberal army. These are the reasons why he must be beaten at all hazards; these are the motives that urge his assailants to strike him down." *The Globe* added: "Mr. Laurier might hold every opinion and stand by every word he has ever expressed, and there is not a Roman Catholic in Ontario who would not be proud to hail him as a worthy representative of his communion in the Canadian Parliament. Bigotry itself in Ontario dared not ostracize a man so able and so distinguished on any such grounds." These views *The Globe* repeated in subsequent articles, and it does not seem that the issue was ever

squarely met by the Conservative press, or that the evidence upon which *The Globe* spoke was ever seriously impugned. There is no doubt that for many years clerical coercion was freely employed against the candidates of the Liberal party in Quebec, and that during all that period the Conservative leaders had the support of the Protestant organizations of Ontario, and of a majority of the English-speaking people of the Lower Province. Moreover, it is doubtful if Mr. Laurier's attitude in Quebec brought any general support to the Liberal party, while such a paper as the *St. John Freeman*, Catholic and Liberal, took issue with *The Globe*, and intimated that its utterances were unwise and impolitic. Anger, grief, and disappointment all find expression in the Montreal *Herald's* comment on the Minister's defeat. *The Herald* said: "The electors of his late constituency will see the day, and that not in the distant future, when they will regret having rejected one of the most brilliant and promising men in the Dominion. Mr. Laurier's defeat is a blow to the Liberal party undoubtedly, and a blow at the cause of honesty, free thought, and political morality in Canada, but it would be absurd to suppose that the verdict of one electoral division, obtained upon false pretences, can inflict an injury that cannot be repaired. Mr. Laurier, if his services are spared to his country, will have a name in history, beside which those of his detractors will be as nothing, and in the future, when the

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accident shall be repaired, he can afford to laugh at the stupidity which has been displayed by the majority of the electors of Drummond and Arthabaska."

The Government, of course, could not permit Mr. Laurier's defeat in Drummond and Arthabaska to interrupt his political career, nor to block his entrance into the Ministry. It was at once determined that he must be returned for some other constituency. Mr. Thibeaudeau offered to resign his seat for Quebec East in the young Minister's favour. Accordingly on November 7th an influential deputation from Quebec went to Arthabaskaville, and, in response to their representations, Mr. Laurier accepted nomination for the division. On the next day he went down to Quebec, and plunged at once into a contest in which he met from his opponents as keen and uncompromising opposition as he had encountered in Drummond and Arthabaska. The *Toronto Globe*, if it is permissible to quote from that paper just one or two additional sentences, in eulogy of Mr. Laurier and in protest against the very determined attempt of the Conservative leaders to keep him out of the Government, said: "Mr. Laurier's entrance into the Cabinet has direct political significance. He takes, with the assumption of office, a new and more influential position. He is sure to exercise that influence in the manner most distasteful and most fatal to his reactionary opponents. The substitution of broad, statesmanlike views

for local and sectarian rivalries and controversies, is of all things needed in Quebec at the present time, and it cannot fail to attract whatever is best, most enlightened, and most patriotic in such a community. So every nerve is being strained to defeat Mr. Laurier again, and thus, if possible, to disgust him with public life."

The old question of amnesty for the leaders in the Red River insurrection appeared in the contest. Two months before, on September 20th, the Government had passed an Order-in-Council which placed O'Donoghue on the same footing as Riel and Lepine, and this was approved by the Imperial authorities. The fact was announced during the election, and at once the cry was raised that the object was to influence the Irish Catholics of Quebec East to support Mr. Laurier. Possibly this idea was not wholly absent from the mind of the Government, and possibly Liberals had very generally concluded that O'Donoghue had figured long enough as a hero and martyr for Conservative politicians, and strictly for campaign purposes. Of course, the main issue raised against the Government in Quebec East, as in Drummond and Arthabaska, was the tariff, but as Mr. Laurier had the support of the large manufacturers of the division, the protectionist argument was less damaging than it would have proved in most industrial communities. He had the unanimous support of the English press of Quebec, as he had had the support of the decisive

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majority of the English-speaking electors of Drummond and Arthabaska.

In a comment on some of his utterances the Quebec *Mercury* said: "Mr. Laurier's remarks were those of the statesman, as distinct from the mere politician, that is, the man of large combinations as distinct from the man of temporary expedients and cunning shifts." *The Mercury* also took occasion to say that if Mr. Laurier were defeated, "It would be a misfortune for the province, as it would show that there was no bridging over the animosities either of the present or of the past. It will, should it occur, show there is a gulf in our political forum which no personal devotion, however patriotic and self-abnegating, can fill. If Mr. Laurier, on the other hand, be elected, a new departure will result from it. The sickening or half-maddening iteration of threadbare rants and worn-out war-cries will give place to real and virile politics, worthy of national attention and enlightened thought." It is true that this was spoken in the heat of an election campaign; but it is the habit of election literature to emphasize the salient characteristics of its heroes, and the common recognition of Mr. Laurier as a man of unusual breadth of view, and of exceptional loftiness of character and nobility of purpose, could not be altogether the product of campaign hysterics and partisan imagination. Besides, as we have seen, if his opponents did not admit the justice of Liberal estimates, they did not

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deny to Mr. Laurier the possession of admirable qualities.

It is vain, however, to expect that considerations of mercy or ideas of chivalry shall enter into an election contest, and in Quebec East, as in Drummond and Arthabaska, Mr. Laurier was fought as sternly and as un pityingly as if he had been the most paltry and sordid of professional politicians. He faced the battle with serene humour and high courage, and won a decisive victory. The polling took place on November 28th, and Mr. Laurier's majority over his Conservative opponent, Mr. Tourangeau, was 315. The news was received with rejoicing by Liberals throughout Canada, and with very special satisfaction by the Administration at Ottawa. In Quebec East a great torch-light procession celebrated the victory, and at other points in the province bonfires blazed and Liberal rejoicing found various and hearty manifestation. Prompt steps were taken to arrange for a public welcome to the Minister on his return to the capital. On December 1st he was accompanied to his home at Arthabaskaville by nearly two thousand of the citizens of the old French capital. They filled two trains. They were accompanied by two or three bands of music. The cars were gaily decorated with the *Rouge* colours. There were several stops by the way, at which the bands played and the Minister addressed the people. On December 4th he reached Montreal, where he was lunched by a representative

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company of Liberals, and in the evening spoke to a great audience from the balcony of the St. Lawrence Hall. All these demonstrations were eclipsed, however, by the welcome he received on the following day at Ottawa. Notwithstanding heavy rain, he was met by a great crowd at the railway station, and presented with an address, to which he spoke in reply in both French and English. He was escorted to the home of the Prime Minister by a procession which embraced six hundred torch-bearers, four bands of music, and over one hundred carriages. His carriage was drawn by four white horses. He was enthusiastically cheered along the route of the parade, and again spoke to the people from the steps of Mr. Mackenzie's residence. Thus the Liberals strove to accentuate the victory in Quebec East, and to wipe out the memory of the defeat in Drummond and Arthabaska. It is noteworthy that throughout these two tumultuous campaigns Mr. Laurier spoke always with moderation and discretion, made no inflammatory appeal, and deliberately overlooked the intrusion into the contest of certain forces and agencies which angered and excited many of the Liberal journals. There is, perhaps, a trace of feeling in his statement at Montreal that he had gone to the very door of the Quebec Government, and there defied and defeated his opponents, as there is a determination characteristic of the man in the memorable sentence: "I have unfurled the Liberal standard above the

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ancient citadel of Quebec, and there I will keep it waving." Almost a quarter of a century has passed since that prophecy was spoken, but the Liberal flag still flies over Quebec East, and over all but eight of the electoral divisions of the old Conservative Province of Quebec.

Mr. Laurier served as Minister under Mr. Mackenzie for only one session. He introduced no very important legislation, but although only a few months in office, he showed an excellent knowledge of the work of his department. He handled his estimates to the satisfaction of his colleagues, and was uniformly considerate and courteous in his treatment of the Opposition. He took a free hand in the general business of the session, and contributed speeches to two or three of its more important discussions. It was, of course, known that dissolution must succeed prorogation, and it was therefore a campaign session, with the tariff and the condition of the country as the chief questions of debate. The Administration was now irrevocably committed to the maintenance of the $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. tariff, while the Opposition grew always bolder in the advocacy of undiluted and irredeemable protection. It is true Sir John Macdonald told the Eastern Provinces that a readjustment rather than an increase of the tariff was contemplated; but that historical message was intended to serve local rather than general purposes, and was at variance with the general tone of the

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Conservative press, and with the general argument of the campaign literature and the campaign speeches.¹ The Liberal party, with flags flying and drums beating, and with brave show of heart and confidence, marched on to utter defeat.

It has been argued that if Mr. Mackenzie had dissolved Parliament immediately after prorogation, and had gone to the country in June, the Administration might have been sustained. But the contest was not brought on until September, and Sir John Macdonald and his allies had all the summer for speaking and for organization. There seems, however, no good reason to think that even if the earlier date had been chosen the result would have been different. The commercial depression was still severe, the protectionist arguments appealed powerfully to struggling manufacturers, impoverished traders, and idle workmen, and the Conservative leaders were united and aggressive, and inspired by phenomenal successes in a long series of bye-elections. It is fair to say that the Liberal leaders were equally aggressive, but it is not so clear that they were equally united. It is doubtful if Mr. Mackenzie was ever quite the absolute and

¹ In June, 1878, Senator John Boyd, of New Brunswick, wired Sir John Macdonald as follows: "The Government press here state that you propose to raise the tariff generally to thirty-five per cent. Can I contradict this?" In reply Sir John Macdonald said: "It is an absurd falsehood; neither in London nor elsewhere have I gone beyond my motion in Parliament, and have never proposed an increase, but a readjustment of the tariff."

unquestioned leader of the Liberal party. There was an element in Parliament and in the country which thought that Mr. Blake should have succeeded to the leadership of the federal party when he resigned the Premiership of Ontario; and while Mr. Blake himself advocated Mr. Mackenzie's appointment, and accepted the subordinate position, not all of the group who asserted Mr. Blake's superior qualifications for the leadership could be reconciled to Mr. Mackenzie's elevation. A hostile critic, remembering the Aurora platform and Mr. Blake's association with some of the protectionist pioneers of the Canada First movement, has said that the National Policy was Mr. Blake's axe, and was stolen by the Conservatives when out of power to cut down the Mackenzie Administration. This writer represented Mr. Mackenzie and George Brown as bound to the altar of British capital, and devoted to the principle of commercial dependency, and Mr. Blake as the friend of nationality and commercial autonomy.¹ The grounds for this conclusion are not readily apparent, although the motive of the writers who strove with a diligence as great as their ingenuity to set Mr. Blake in antagonism to Brown and Mackenzie is easily understood. Mr. Blake, himself, however, had rather a fitful connection with the Mackenzie Government, now changing portfolios, now serving without portfolio, and now for a season refusing

¹ *The Bystander* for April, 1881.

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office altogether—and, most unfortunate of all, during the election contest he was compelled by ill-health to be absent from the country.

For the greater part of his term of office Mr. Mackenzie was cruelly overworked. He never learned to use subordinates in his department nor in Parliament. A worn-out man cannot always be conciliatory. A departmental drudge is not always fit for the delicate and manifold details of party management. The country benefited, the Liberal party suffered, from Mr. Mackenzie's excessive application to public business. Canada has had no other Minister of Public Works equal to Mr. Mackenzie, and perhaps no more powerful debater ever spoke in the Canadian Parliament. In the House and in the country he made magnificent defence of his Administration, and if Providence had been kind, the crops good, and trade flourishing, he could not have been successfully attacked, and his Government could not have been overturned.

It was a violent and bad-tempered campaign. There were speeches made by men of very considerable standing in both parties that are no credit to our political literature. The press, too, was savage and sometimes venomous, but upon the whole its tone was better than that of the politicians. Mr. Mackenzie and his colleagues knew in advance that they would be badly beaten in Quebec, but they looked with confidence to

Ontario and to the Eastern Provinces. The Prime Minister was fully satisfied that he would have a majority in Ontario at least equal to any majority the Conservatives could take out of Quebec. On this point he would scarcely hear argument. While George Brown had moments of doubt and uneasiness, he shared generally in the confidence of the Prime Minister. They could not be persuaded that Ontario would ever overlook the transactions which led to Sir John Macdonald's downfall five years before.¹ Mr. Laurier, on the other hand, had no hope at all that the Government would survive the elections. He was convinced before he entered the Ministry that it was on its death-bed, and was very reluctant to forsake his fine law business at Arthabaskaville for a few months of ministerial apprenticeship at Ottawa. He, of course, gave most of his time to his own province, and spoke in behalf of Liberal candidates in many constituencies. It

¹ In a speech in the House of Commons on March 20th, 1902, Mr. John Charlton, M.P., for North Norfolk, said that the leader of the Reform Government in 1878, and his Ministers had not the slightest anticipation that they were in danger. They did not at all realize the condition of public sentiment. For his part, he held twenty or thirty meetings in each year in his constituency, and felt that his position was critical. He felt that as a supporter of the Mackenzie Government he was liable to be defeated, and in June, 1878, he wrote to Mr. Mackenzie, telling him that, in his opinion, the Government was in a dangerous position, was resting in a fancied security, and might wake up upon the realization of disaster. He advised Mr. Mackenzie to postpone the date of the elections, take measures to have the fiscal question thoroughly discussed in every riding, and the protective policy combated by good speakers everywhere. In reply, Mr. Mac-

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was a vain fight, he well knew, so far as Quebec was concerned, but nevertheless he fought at his best, and easily retained his own seat for Quebec East. During the campaign he visited Ontario and spoke at one or two meetings. This experience confirmed his impression that the Government was doomed, and that in Ontario as well as in Quebec public feeling was decisively with Sir John Macdonald and the National Policy. On September 17th, the blow fell. The Government was beaten in every province except New Brunswick. Sir John Macdonald came back to power with a majority of eighty-six at his back, and the era of Protection dawned for Canada.

kenzie, according to Mr. Charlton, "had the kindness to write me a long, long letter, to disabuse my mind of the false impressions I had imbibed; to show me that really I failed entirely to apprehend the drift of public sentiment; to assure me that the Government was perfectly safe; that there was no danger at all; and that it was folly for me to borrow trouble. He went on to enter into details, and to show me the ridings we were sure to carry, the ridings we might possibly lose, the ridings we might possibly gain, and he wound up his survey of the field by the assertion that he would come back to power with a majority of sixty members in the House of Commons. Well, I did not believe it, but when the thunderbolt fell on September 17th, I must confess that I was paralyzed, for I had no anticipation that there would be a majority of sixty on the opposite side. But such was the case."

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

IN order to grasp the full significance of the noteworthy speech on Political Liberalism which Mr. Laurier delivered at Quebec in June, 1877, it is advisable to consider the conditions which necessitated and justified that important deliverance. We have seen in the condemnation of the *Institut Canadien*, in the persecution of Guibord, in the censure passed upon *Le Pays* and other Liberal journals, in the influences arrayed against Mr. Laurier in Drummond and Arthabaska, something of the temper of the Ultramontanes, and something of the unhappy relations existing between the Liberal party and the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Lower Canada. It may be that the clergy misconceived the aims, and misunderstood the spirit of the Liberal party; and did not, for sinister purposes, maintain a deliberate alliance with the Conservative politicians. The assertion of the supremacy of the State in civil affairs is an essential feature of Liberal policy. But Liberalism is equally bound to practise religious tolerance, to respect all honest phases of religious opinion, and to afford equal protection to all forms of religious faith. The Liberal party

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of Canada has never sought to proscribe the Roman Catholic religion, to make inquisition into its forms and ceremonies, to restrict in any measure the propagation of its tenets, or force it into any subordinate relationship to the great Protestant denominations. Aside from its assertion of the supremacy of the State in public affairs, the Liberal party has had no quarrel with the Catholic ecclesiastics, and has never flinched from the duty of defence and protest when their legitimate interests were threatened, or their admitted rights imperilled. But from 1870 to 1880 Ultramontanism had a formidable ascendancy in Lower Canada, and as a necessary consequence of the very spirit and constitution of the Liberal party it had to wage a mighty battle for existence against its powerful ecclesiastical opponents.

The *Programme Catholique* was perhaps the first distinct utterance of political Ultramontanism in the Province of Quebec. This document was first published in *Le Journal des Trois Rivières* on April 20th, 1870. Its chief significance lay in an extract from a pastoral letter by the Bishop of Three Rivers. The document, in fact, was an expansion of the pastoral, and did not bear the episcopal *imprimatur*. It developed, however, into the authorized programme of the Jesuits and Ultramontanes, directed and inspired by Bishop Bourget and his allies, and received the direct countenance and sanction of the united episcopacy.

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"It is impossible to deny," said the Bishop of Three Rivers, "that politics are closely linked with religion; and that the separation of Church and State is a doctrine absurd and impious. This is especially true under constitutional rule, which, assigning the entire legislative power to Parliament, places in the hands of those who compose it a two-edged weapon which might prove terrible." It was necessary, therefore, that those into whose hands the legislative power was committed, should be in perfect accord with the teachings of the Church. "Full and entire adhesion to Roman Catholic doctrines in religion, in politics, and in social economy ought to be the first and principal qualification which the Catholic electors should require from the candidate." The Conservative party were presented as the defenders of social authority. They were described as a group of men professing sincerely sound principles of religion, patriotism, and nationality, inviolably attached to Catholic doctrines, and manifesting an absolute devotion to the national interests of Lower Canada. Still, support of the Conservative party was to be "subordinated to the interests of religion." The laws touching marriage, education, the erection of parishes, and the compulsory register of marriages, baptisms, and burials, restricted the freedom and authority of the Church, hampered its administration, and could be interpreted in a hostile spirit. "This state of things imposes on Catholic

legislators the duty of changing and modifying these laws in the way in which our Lords the Bishops of the province demand, to the end that they may be put into harmony with the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church." It was, therefore, the duty of the electors to give their votes only to those who were willing to conform entirely to the teachings of the Church in these matters. If two Conservative candidates appeared, the one who subscribed to the Programme should be supported. Where candidates of each party were in nomination, they should vote for the Conservative. If a Conservative who rejected the Programme should be opposed by a Liberal who accepted its propositions, the position, the Bishop admitted, "would be very delicate." Acceptance of such a Conservative would involve the surrender of the main object, while by voting for the Liberal they would put the Conservative party which they desired to see powerful in peril. In such a contingency, therefore, electors were advised to abstain from voting.¹

The Programme was resisted by powerful influences within the Church itself; by all that group of ecclesiastics who still stood for the Gallican liberties; by the moderate counsels of the Sulpicians; by the liberal spirit of Laval university; and even by Sir George Cartier and some of his political organs. There is also good evidence that Mgr. Baillargeon,

¹ See "Rome in Canada" by Charles Lindsey, pages 153-156.

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then Archbishop of Quebec, and his successor, Mgr. Taschereau, sought to curb the zeal of the Ultramontanes. The Primates, however, were opportunists rather than disciples of Gallicanism, and were probably withheld from distinct identification with the Ultramontanes only by their very aggressive action and very immoderate demands. Thus, while Archbishop Taschereau was particularly active in checking and resisting their more extreme pretensions, he was careful to avoid any attack upon the ultramontane doctrines which were then strongly upheld by Pope Leo XIII. The Church of Quebec, like that of France, whence came its form and temper, maintained the unity of the faith with Rome, but cherished the spirit of nationality, accepted the principle of State sovereignty in civil concerns, and maintained large rights of self-government.¹ Ultramontanism, upon the other hand, represents those propositions of the *Syllabus*, which declare that within the sphere which she

¹ Gallicanism is described by Chambers' *Encyclopædia* as that system in Roman Catholic theology, which, while it recognizes the primacy of the Roman Pontiff by divine right over the universal church, yet asserts the independence of national churches in many details of self-government and of local discipline, and limits the exercise of the papal prerogatives by canons and decrees of general councils and by the laws of the universal church.

“It has always been the maxim of the French Court that the Papal power is to be restricted by means of the French clergy, and that the clergy, on the other hand, are to be kept in due limits by means of the papal power.” Ranke's “History of the Popes,” Bohn's edition, Vol. II., page 420.

chooses to define for herself the Church is superior to the civil authority.

From this time the war against the Gallican ideas was waged with uncompromising rigour. The Sulpicians were crippled by the division of the parish of Notre Dame and by the introduction of Ultramontanes into the new parishes thus created. Laval was attacked, and a determined attempt was made to establish a rival university in Montreal under the inspiration and direction of the Programmists. The *Institut Canadien*, a centre of Gallican teaching, was banned and hunted. The dress of the clergy was changed. The use of the Roman Mantle and Hat was prescribed. The old ornaments of the churchwarden's pew, the crucifix and the *candelabra* were removed and described by Bishop Bourget as mummeries. The old French Ritual was suppressed, with all the ancient Gallican ceremonies. All, in fact, that was characteristic of the Gallican Church was abolished, and Roman and Ultramontane dresses and ceremonies substituted. The Jesuits, who had secured an equivocal incorporation in 1854 as the College of St. Mary, grew in influence and authority, and steadily increased their control over the educational system of the province. The *Fabrique*, a quasi-municipal body designed to control the temporalities of the Church, and to determine the expenditures of the parishes for church purposes, was practically abolished, and the bishop was vested with absolute

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power to dispose of church funds. The Legislature was subservient, the masses of the people docile, the Ultramontane arrogant, aggressive, and singularly able and intrepid.

A year after the appearance of the Programme, the golden wedding of the priesthood of Bishop Bourget was celebrated. Archbishops, bishops, and many of the inferior clergy attended, and advantage was taken of the occasion to make bold and defiant assertion of the extreme clerical claims for which Bishop Bourget contended. Father Braun, a Jesuit priest, and a faithful representative of his order, was selected to deliver the sermon. He claimed for the Church the prerogative of making laws to bind the conscience, and to which the State was bound to submit. The Church, he claimed, had the right to make laws on the subject of marriage, to erect parishes without the intervention of the civil power, and to superintend education in the public schools. The State was bound to yield obedience to the Church, and the fashion of looking on the majority as the source of right was a revival of pagan despotism. He declared that Gallicanism and Liberal Catholicism had powerfully contributed to the propagation of many and grave errors. Gallicanism was defined as "insubordination towards the Holy Father, servility to the civil power, despotism towards inferiors." The Gallican refused to obey the Pope, against whom he armed himself with the protection of the powers of this earth, while he gave

to the civil power which protected him in his rebellion all the authority which he refused to the Sovereign Pontiff. Everywhere the Gallicans were the flatterers of the civil power to which they had recourse, even in ecclesiastical cases in which the Bishop or the Pope should have the right of adjudication. Liberalism was condemned with the same unsparing severity. "This," said Father Braun, "is a so-called generosity towards error; it is a readiness to yield on the score of principles. Liberal Catholics grant to the State the right of requiring that parishes, bishoprics, and religious orders be civilly incorporated, as a condition of their having the right to limit the possessions of the Church, and to make laws for regulating the administration of church property. They grant to the State the right of taking possession of church property and keeping it, thus sanctioning the principle of communism. Speak to these sacrilegious usurpers of restitution: their only answer will be a sneer. Liberal Catholics pretend that the State can prescribe the form of marriage, define invalidating impediments, and pronounce upon the conjugal ties in matrimonial causes. Liberal Catholics confide to the State the superintendence and direction of primary schools, to the detriment of the Church and fathers of families. They grant to the State the rights of intervening in the erection of parishes, independently of any authorization of the Holy See." All these fatal errors, he declared, must be

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fought against, the State must be entirely subordinated to the Church, must give its civil sanction to the decrees of the Church, and defend and enforce all her claims, both civil and spiritual.

The Roman Catholic Episcopate of Quebec in a Joint Pastoral of September 22nd, 1875, declared that "The Church is not only independent of civil society, but is superior to it by her comprehensiveness and by her end." Again, "The State is therefore in the Church and not the Church in the State." And again, "The priest and the bishop may and ought to speak not only to the electors and candidates, but even to the constituted authorities." The clause denouncing Catholic Liberalism reads: "Catholic Liberalism, says Pius IX., is the most inveterate and the most dangerous enemy of the divine constitution of the Church. Like unto the serpent which crept into the earthly paradise to tempt and bring to ruin the human race, it presents to the children of Adam the deceitful allurements of a certain liberty, and a certain science of good and evil: a liberty and a science which end in death. It seeks to creep imperceptibly into the most holy places; it fascinates the most clear-sighted, and poisons the most ingenuous souls, should their faith in the infallible authority of the Sovereign Pontiff waver ever so little."

Bishop Bourget of Montreal, in promulgating the decrees of the Fifth Council of Quebec, intimated that no candidate should be returned to Parliament

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who questioned the right of the priests to employ spiritual censures in elections, or who rejected "the intervention of the Pope, the bishops, and the priests in the affairs of governments." The Bishop of Rimouski, on the eve of the provincial election of 1875, issued a letter to the clergy in which he maintained the right of pastors to influence voters by spiritual censures, and held that it was not permissible to practise moral independence in political questions. The result of these and similar instructions was a very general participation of parish priests in party contests, and in the main against Liberal candidates. As a consequence, public opinion throughout the country was greatly excited, and something very like a religious war prevailed in Lower Canada.

On December 22nd, 1875, a meeting was held at Montreal for the purpose of forming a Protestant Defence Association. Among the chief promoters of the movement were the Rev. Dr. Wilkes, the Rev. Professor MacVicar, M. H. Gault, the Very Rev. Dean Bond, and the Rev. Dr. Douglas. It was set out in the resolutions that such action was necessary, in order to resist the increasingly aggressive spirit of the Roman Catholic hierarchy as shown not only in influencing the Government and Legislature, but in other ways affecting civil and religious rights and liberties in Canada. The objects of the Association were declared to be—the resistance to all efforts on the part of the Roman

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Catholic hierarchy to violate the established principles of civil and religious government, and the guidance and protection of Protestants and others who might be exposed to the persecution of the Roman Catholic priesthood. Vigilance committees were appointed to watch and expose all attempts of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics to influence unduly municipal and other public bodies, to pass upon the character of legislation promoted by the bishops, to supply legal advice in cases touching the civil and religious rights of Protestants, and generally to resist the intrusion of the hierarchy into the field of civil affairs. It may be said by hostile critics that the organizers of this movement were aggressive Protestants, and conspicuous opponents of the dominant church in Quebec, and that they were animated by motives of sectarian bigotry, rather than by concern for the public welfare and zeal for the principles of civil freedom and religious toleration. But a dispassionate examination of the arrogant claims then advanced by the Roman Catholic bishops to supremacy within the realm of the State reveals ample grounds for vigilance and protest, and suggests that the leaders of Protestant thought could hardly have done less than organize to resist the pretensions and encroachments of the Ultramontanes.

We shall better understand the state of public feeling when we recall the extraordinary speech made by the Hon. L. S. Huntington in Argenteuil

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a few days after this Protestant Defence Association was formed at Montreal.¹ Mr. Huntington had been in public life for many years, and must have acquired some of the caution and discretion which the practice of politics breeds in even the most impulsive and intemperate characters. Mr. Huntington, however, was not noteworthy for platform indiscretions, and as a Minister of the Crown, was doubly responsible for the taste and temper of his utterances. He must therefore have been moved by immense provocation when he delivered at St. Andrews, on December 30th, 1875, the speech which history will excuse, if it cannot wholly justify. A vacancy had occurred in the representation of Argenteuil in the House of Commons, and a new election was ordered for January 7th, 1876. Dr. Christie was in the field as an independent Liberal candidate, and it was understood that Mr. Thomas White, of Montreal, an able and distinguished journalist, and afterwards a ministerial colleague of Sir John Macdonald, would stand in the Conservative interest.

Mr. White's candidature was in fact definitely announced, and he and Huntington on the date named met at a joint public meeting at St. Andrews. In the course of his remarkable address, the Minister said the time had come when the English Protestants were allying themselves with

¹ Huntington was Postmaster-General in the Mackenzie Government, and represented the County of Shefford in Quebec.

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the French Liberals of Lower Canada, and this, he argued, was the only reasonable alliance in the interest of free thought and free speech. He said that twenty years of British Protestant Toryism in Lower Canada had given birth to Ultramontanism, which might work serious trouble in the future. He described Mr. White as the tool of those who were fighting in Lower Canada to make the State subservient to the Church, and declared that "a great battle was imminent; it undoubtedly would be fought and fought soon. There was nothing for it but that the English-speaking people of Lower Canada must ally themselves with the French Liberals who were and always had been the friends of free institutions." He said further: "Let Mr. White stand forth in his true colours, and let the English-speaking people of Argenteuil acknowledge if they desire to send him to Parliament as the ally of the Programme and the apostle of Ultramontan-ism; and let them declare that the English-speaking people of this province are no longer British; that tolerance and fair play have no charms for them; and that their highest pleasure and duty is to make the State the mere machinery for registering the decrees of the Church." "But, once let them assert themselves," he proceeded, "as the friends of British freedom and justice, and the enemy's guns would be silenced, and the reactionists or their masters would return to the European countries where their opinions are dominant, or elsewhere, to seek

more hopeful grounds for their operations." He said that he desired to compromise no one, but he had always preached those doctrines, and would be prepared at once to resign his position, if he believed the party with whom he acted was not equal to their maintenance. It is perhaps impossible now to determine what effect this utterance had upon the electors of Argenteuil, but at least Mr. White withdrew from the contest, and Dr. Christie was elected by acclamation.

The speech made a national sensation. It was pounced upon with positive glee by the Ultramontane press and many of the organs of the Conservative party. Here was a deliverance which seemed to threaten the Church, and therefore to excuse, if not to justify protest from the great Catholic and French elements of the population against the illiberal and inquisitorial spirit of the Liberal party. Mr. Huntington, a Liberal Minister, called on the English-speaking minority of Quebec to unite against the Church of the French-speaking majority, and therefore French and Catholics must stand together in defence of their race and faith. The speech, in fact, was admirably calculated to inflame the zeal of the organs and agents of the obscurantist movement, and was just such a weapon as the *Bleu* politicians could use to advantage in French and Catholic communities.¹ There was a

¹ "I then read some extracts from Hon. Mr. Huntington's speech which I now produce; I then explained what was the bearing of that

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measure of justification, both for Mr. Huntington's position and for that of his assailants. The Liberal party had a right to expect that the English-speaking people would support its contention for the supremacy of the State in civil concerns, and join with the French Liberals to put down undue clerical interference in political contests. But in essence at least the speech savoured of appeal to race feeling, and such appeal was absolutely inadmissible. We shall better get the point of view if we conceive an appeal by a French Canadian politician to the French-speaking majority of

discourse; I spoke then of the pastoral letter of the bishops of the ecclesiastical Province of Quebec, and I said that Catholic Liberalism was condemned, and that I myself, knowing the meaning of the bearing of Huntington's speech and of the pastoral letter of the bishops, I should believe I was committing a sin if I voted for Mr. P. A. Tremblay."—Evidence of Rev. Francois Cinq-Mars, parish priest of St. Simeon, in the Charlevoix Election Case.

"I contended that a Minister of the Crown who professed the principles advocated by Mr. Huntington could not and should not have Catholics as colleagues, and that a Government having this Minister as one of its members could not be supported by Catholics, except if these accept the denomination of Liberal Catholics, condemned by the bishops' *mandement*. I wanted to cause people to understand that if Mr. Tremblay supported the Government to which Mr. Huntington belonged, he was to be considered as holding the opinions expressed by the Minister, and therefore be considered as a Liberal Catholic. . . . Mr. Huntington still remaining a Minister, I was of opinion that a Catholic should not and could not support that Government, and that Mr. Tremblay who supported that Administration was therefore to be classed among the Liberal Catholics who are condemned by the bishops' pastoral letter."—Evidence of Sir Hector Langevin in the Charlevoix Election Case.

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Quebec to unite upon a religious, or even upon a more legitimate public issue. Mr. Huntington had the right to address an argument against clerical intimidation to English and French electors alike, but it was mischievous and dangerous to limit his appeal to one element of the population, and, moreover, calculated to prejudice the position of the French Liberals whose cause he sought to serve.

The speech seriously disturbed Catholic Liberals all over the country. One of these, Mr. Power, M.P. for Halifax, on January 17th, addressed a letter to the Minister in which he admitted that some Catholic priests, clergymen, and newspapers might have taken an improper course in politics, and said that if Huntington had confined his remarks to these offenders no one could reasonably have found fault. He contended, however, that Huntington's remarks were unfortunately not so confined and were therefore calculated to give offence to Catholics generally. Doubtless the purpose of this letter was to draw an explanation from Huntington, and in his reply of January 28th, the Minister insisted that he did confine his remarks to "such offenders" and continued: "So far from dreaming of attacking Catholics as a body, I thought I was defending against the political action of certain of their co-religionists that large proportion of the Catholic population with which it has been my good fortune

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to act for years." He did not introduce, he said, but on the contrary, protested against the introduction of religious controversy into political conflicts, and believed that Catholic and Protestant might and should agree to differ on these political questions, altogether irrespective of their religious opinions, and that any other line of action would be subversive of our institutions. Whether this explanation was or was not satisfactory to Mr. Power does not appear. It certainly was not satisfactory to the mass of Catholic Liberals, and many leading Protestant Liberals felt that something more must be done to overcome the effects of Huntington's Argenteuil deliverance.

Parliament met early in February, and during the debate on the Address, Mr. Holton rose and called on Mr. Mackenzie to accept or disavow responsibility for the utterances of his colleague. He characterized Mr. Huntington's speech as "a most unfortunate one," and as an attempt "to stir up religious strife in the Province of Quebec." He described it as "a very offensive attack upon the dignitaries of the Church of the great majority of the people of Quebec, and constituting a very large proportion of the people of this whole Dominion." He reminded the House that Mr. Huntington had closed his speech in Argenteuil with the declaration that those were his opinions, that he was satisfied that they were the opinions of his party, and that if he were not sustained in the expression

of those opinions he would resign his position. He, therefore, demanded to know if Mr. Huntington had received instructions to make any such speech, or whether the Prime Minister "now approves of the substance of these remarks, or of the good taste, good judgment, and statesmanship of the Hon. Postmaster General in making this utterance."¹

From no one could this censure have come with more crushing effect than from Mr. Holton. He was the Nestor of the Liberal party in Quebec. The services that he had performed for Liberalism in Canada were matched by few of his contemporaries, and, indeed, have been equalled by few of his successors. His courage, independence, and integrity were alike unquestioned, and it is natural to think that he would not have ventured to pass this stern judgment upon Huntington, if he had not been profoundly persuaded that his course in Argenteuil was fraught with danger to the Liberal party, and inimical to the peace and good government of the country. There is, it is fair to say, a tradition in the Liberal party that the relations between Mr. Holton and Mr. Huntington were not quite cordial. It became a question when the Mackenzie Government was formed whether Holton or Huntington should be selected as the representative in the Cabinet of the English minority of Quebec. Under ordinary circumstances Holton would doubtless have been

¹ Hansard, February 11th, 1876, pages 19-21.

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chosen. But Huntington was particularly active in formulating and driving home the charge of corrupt dealings between Conservative Ministers and Sir Hugh Allan over the Pacific Railway Charter, and into his hands fell the incriminating documents which revealed Allan's direct contributions to Sir John Macdonald and Sir George Cartier. In consequence of his activity in this memorable prosecution, he was violently assailed by the Conservative politicians and their press, and it was felt that if he were excluded from the Cabinet it would be an intense satisfaction to his personal and political enemies, and would seem like an abandonment by his own party associates. Hence he was admitted to the Cabinet and Mr. Holton necessarily excluded. Holton bowed to Mr. Mackenzie's judgment with excellent temper, the more easily as he was not excessively anxious to take a portfolio, and remained the staunch friend and ally of the Prime Minister. But friends of Huntington contend that while Holton at the moment recognized the expediency of Huntington's appointment to the Government, he was not so well convinced that his rival should have taken office, and cherished his own superior claims to the leadership of the English minority of Lower Canada. This tradition may be unjust to Holton, but, at least, he was a suspicious critic of Huntington, and possibly was influenced more than he knew by the non-recognition of his long service in the Liberal party and great influence in the country.

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The story of politics is full of serious personal differences developed in just such fashion, and even very great men have shown that they can be sorely wounded and influenced in all their political relationships by the loss of personal preferment. If, however, it be true that Holton and Huntington were estranged, at least Holton's devotion to his principles and loyalty to his party were absolutely unaffected.

Mr. Holton's speech put the Prime Minister in a difficult position. He could not afford to pass direct condemnation upon a colleague, and he knew that Mr. Huntington had spoken the inner convictions of many thousands of Liberals throughout the country. He knew also that if not repudiated, the speech must work great mischief in French and Catholic communities, and that these elements represented forty per cent. of the voting population of Canada. In reply to Mr. Holton, therefore, the Prime Minister was necessarily guarded, and avoided direct repudiation of the utterance of his Minister. He said he did not approve of anything that had a tendency to bring religion into public discussion in the politics of the country. He called the attention of Parliament to the fact that in his published letter addressed to Mr. Power, of Halifax, Huntington had explained that he did not design any attack upon the Catholic Church in his speech, and declared he had no doubt that this was the case, because he had too much faith in Huntington's

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own generous disposition and correct appreciation of the public affairs of the country to believe that he could be a party to a desire to assail any religious denomination.¹

Of course the Premier's statement was not satisfactory to Mr. Masson, Mr. Langevin, and other Conservative leaders from Lower Canada, and the debate in its wide range covered the more recent history of public affairs in Quebec, the attitude of the hierarchy in political contests, and the measure of obedience due from Catholic laymen to the heads of the Church. Mr. Masson declared that as a Conservative and an Ultramontane, he was ready to give to the clergy in religious questions submission and confidence, and upon questions relating to the material progress of the country and its political affairs that respect for their opinions to which they were entitled owing to their high intelligence, their great virtue, and their disinterestedness, but no more. He absolutely rejected the doctrine that the clergy should remain in their vestries, and asked "whether, if the clergy of Lower Canada had remained in their vestries we would belong to-day to the noble Empire of England?" Further, whether Catholics were priest-ridden or not was none of Mr. Huntington's business, nor the business of any man who did not profess the Catholic creed. Mr. Langevin denounced Huntington's speech as an "insult aimed at the Catholic population of the

¹ Hansard, February 11th, 1876, page 20.

Dominion and the bishops of Lower Canada," and contended that the clergy had a right to interfere in elections, and that they claimed only the privileges of citizens. Neither quite justified spiritual coercion and intimidation; but they put up a very thorough defence of their clerical allies, and had no word of condemnation for their pretensions to supreme authority in the realm of the State, and partisan activity in many of the French constituencies. Mr. Cauchon also took occasion to repudiate and condemn his colleague in the Cabinet. Mr. Mackenzie Bowell, one of the Orange leaders from Ontario, was likewise distressed by the Minister's indiscretion. In short, judgment was generally pronounced against Huntington, the relations between the Church and the Liberal party were much aggravated, and very considerable capital was made of the affair by the Conservative politicians.¹

But Huntington was neither silenced nor intimidated. He at length intervened in the debate, and it is manifest that his chief regret was that his speech at Argenteuil had bred a difference between

¹ The *Canadian Monthly* of March, 1876, in a comment on Mr. Mackenzie Bowell's speech, said: "The Grand Master sits in Parliament cheek by jowl with one who boasts himself the 'leader of the Ultramontanes,' and applauds his utterances without qualification, and the Order is at this moment the Ontario wing of the politico-theological army, of which Mgr. Bourget is the chief, and M. Masson or M. Langevin the first lieutenant." In consequence, however, of attacks on his position in Parliament during this debate Mr. Bowell said later, in a letter to the *Christian Guardian*, "I never, even by implication, disapproved of the sentiments in the speech of Mr. Huntington."

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Holton and himself. He told the House that the speech under consideration was pronounced by himself in his native Province of Quebec to his own people, and upon a question in which they were deeply concerned. No member of the Government was responsible for the speech, and he had the right to express his individual opinions to his own people. "The opinions which I expressed are my opinions. They were my opinions then and are my opinions now." He said further: "Looking at the great conflict going on in Lower Canada, and being among my own people, the people over whom I desire to exercise a certain influence, which intention I then and there described, I spoke to them of the dread I had of the Ultramontanes, and I asked them to give to the Liberals their aid. This is the head and front of my offending. I said what I say now, that they ought to do it, and I believe they will do it." He declared that he was not ashamed of his alliance with the Quebec Liberals, that they, like himself, had upheld free institutions against very powerful influences, that he had not spoken as a Minister but as a Lower Canadian and a citizen of that province, and still maintained that the true course of the British population in Quebec was to ally themselves with the French Liberals in their efforts to maintain free institutions.¹

One other speech that was made in this debate

¹ Hansard, February 11th, 1876, page 36.

should not be passed over without mention. Mr. Bechard represented Iberville in the Commons for thirty years, and was appointed to the Senate a few months after Mr. Laurier became Prime Minister. Modest in bearing, moderate in statement, of high character and solid attainments, he is a fine type of the old *Rouge* who stood unflinchingly for freedom of thought and freedom of speech throughout all the stormy era of ecclesiastical despotism in Quebec. He asked the House to remember that for years the Liberal party of Lower Canada had been denounced by the Conservative press and upon the hustings at each election as composed of men hostile to the Roman Catholic Church. He took direct issue with the contention of Mr. Langevin that priests had the right to speak from the pulpit in favour of particular candidates. "I do not think so," he said, "else it would be necessary to believe that the priests have the right to control the politics of the country, and at the elections to impose their will upon the electors; and it would also be necessary to conclude, if the contentions of the Conservative party in this respect were admitted to be well founded, that to be a Catholic it is requisite to be also a Conservative." This sturdy French Liberal proceeded, in his careful and correct English, to say that for years many French Canadian Conservatives had spoken more of religion than of politics on the hustings, and had denounced the Liberal party as hostile to the

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Church, "to sustain whom or elevate to power would be to materially damage the interests of the Church." He charged that the Conservatives sought to make the electors of Quebec believe that the Liberal party sympathized with "the subversive and utterly absurd doctrines of the French socialists." At each election this was a plank in the Conservative platform, and these tactics he denounced as constituting "a deplorable state of things." Finally he had the courage to declare that Huntington's speech "was provoked to a certain extent by the conduct of the Conservative press in introducing religious questions into the discussion of political matters whenever opportunity offered."¹ This was frank speaking, and it cannot be doubted that Mr. Bechard exactly described the situation in Quebec, and correctly indicated and properly characterized the influences which provoked, if they did not justify, Mr. Huntington's disturbing utterance in the county of Argenteuil.

Mr. Huntington was not the only representative of the English minority in Quebec to speak out against the aggressive and intolerant policy of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastics. Sir Alexander Galt was not a Liberal, it was not his habit to traffic in race and sectarian issues for partisan purposes, and he was well entitled, by virtue of his high character and his eminent services to Canada, to address the Canadian people on any grave question of public

¹ Hansard, February 11th, 1876, pages 45-47.

concern. Just at this time he put out two pamphlets dedicated to Mr. Gladstone, who was then thundering against the Vatican decrees. These pamphlets were designed "to oppose and protest against the efforts now being made by the Roman Catholic hierarchy of Quebec to impose upon those belonging to their communion the extreme doctrines of the Italian ecclesiastical school."

In the course of his argument Galt remarked that it was "eminently suggestive of the light in which our Quebec rulers are regarded, to observe the very different ground occupied by the Roman Catholic Church in this province, from that taken in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces." He contended that : "The contradictory attitude of the Church of Rome in different countries, and at this moment even in the Dominion, can only be explained by the extraordinary elasticity with which it adapts itself to surrounding circumstances. Wherever it reigns supreme and controls the civil Government, it is exclusive, despotic, and grasping ; but when, as in England and until lately in Canada, it is unconnected with the State, it confines itself to its proper functions of teaching piety and morality." He quoted at length to prove this policy of adaptation, to show that the Church had never absolutely withdrawn from any of its alleged franchises, to establish that in this age the Church would not insist upon its extreme claims when vigorously resisted, and to demonstrate that the hierarchy

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was then striving to introduce into Quebec innovations equally repugnant to the Catholic as to the Protestant. He contended that for some years there had been a steady invasion of the Roman Catholic clerical body in Lower Canada by "the energetic spirit of the Ultramontane," and that "The bishops were brought more directly under the control of the Sacred College; vacancies in the Episcopate were filled with men more suited to the requirements of Rome; greater development was given to the establishment of religious bodies; and the control of education, both in its higher and inferior branches, was sought to be placed in the hands of the priesthood."

He quoted various official utterances of the hierarchy in Quebec inimical to the exercise of free speech, a free press, and free political action, and charged that they sought to "rivet the most extreme pretensions of the *Syllabus* on the consciences of their people, wholly disregarding the moderate and wise course of action laid down by Archbishop Lynch of Ontario and Archbishop Connolly of Nova Scotia." He argued from the evidence produced that the Catholic Church in Quebec extended its demands to the general assertion of the superiority of ecclesiastical over civil authority; to positive interference with both voters and candidates in the elections; to the exercise of proscription against the press; to the condemnation of freedom of speech in opposition to the judgment of the Privy

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Council as declared in the Guibord appeal ; and to the extraordinary proposition, to use Galt's language, that the Divine assistance held to be given to the Pope alone when speaking *ex cathedra* on "faith and morals," descended with undiminished force to the bishops, priests, and curés. He saw in the attitude of the political leaders forcible evidence of their conviction that victory would rest with the party favoured by the Roman Catholic Church ; declared that the provincial Government had passed completely under the influence of the hierarchy ; and doubted if language more expressive of profound submission to the priesthood could be found than that used by Mr. Masson and Mr. Langevin when Huntington's speech was under consideration in the House of Commons. In his closing sentences he warned the Church that if "this struggle is allowed to extend and intensify, then the day which sees the triumph of the priest will usher in that which will overthrow his power forever. It is impossible that in a province of the Protestant Empire of Great Britain, on the continent of America, in the presence of forty millions of Protestants, a slavery should be imposed upon us by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which exists no longer even under the shadow of the Vatican. Free speech, free thought, and a free press must have the fullest scope in America ; and if, in a wild scheme to reduce them to obedience to the will of the priesthood, they be for the moment repressed,

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all history tells us that the torrent when it bursts will sweep away far more than the barrier that arrested its course, and will leave behind the wreck of many noble Catholic institutions, to mock the folly of those who make unwilling adversaries of natural and affectionate friends." Finally Galt called for an organization composed of Catholics and Protestants, irrespective of creed, nationality, or political party, for the maintenance of the civil rights of the people, and declared his conviction that "such an organization, thoroughly in earnest, would bring sufficient pressure on our rulers, both at Ottawa and Quebec, to insure their compliance, and to settle for our day at least the proper and harmonious relations of Church and State."¹

Galt repeated many of these arguments in an address in June, 1876, at Toronto. He emphasized the great influence which 65 members could exert in a Parliament of 206 members, contended that the party which could secure the vote of Quebec could control the Dominion, and substantially argued that the party which submitted to the domination of the Church could control Quebec. He protested his freedom from mere sectarian prejudice, and denied that he sought to interfere with any man's faith, or to create or promote religious dissension in the country. He was concerned only with the assertion and maintenance

¹ See the pamphlet "Church and State" by Sir Alex. T. Galt, K.C.M.G., published at Montreal in 1876.

of the civil rights of the people; opposed to the increasing measure of clerical control over education in Quebec; to the dangerous power vested in the ecclesiastics for the erection of parishes; to the claims of the Church to superior power over other religious denominations in virtue of the Act of Capitulation; and to its arrogant interference in political contests.

A few weeks after this address was delivered, Archbishop Lynch spoke at length on the relations which, according to Catholic doctrine, should obtain between Church and State, and the measure of interference in public affairs permissible to Catholic ecclesiastics. The address is an able and scholarly review of the history of the Church in its relations to rulers and governments. While furnishing a reading of history which perhaps few Protestants will accept, it still claims no such liberty and authority for the hierarchy as the Ultramontanes of Quebec demanded and exercised. The Archbishop contended that when the Pope dethroned kings, he did so, not as the head of the Church, but as Chief Executive of the Catholic confederation of States, called in the middle ages Christendom, and, by the general consent of the time, as arbiter. The earlier Church never used the power, but it judged what were heresies and blasphemies, and handed over those who were guilty of these offences to be punished by the State authorities. The divine right of kings was not Catholic

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doctrine, and the Church was not inimical to popular government. Where the people framed their own laws and governed themselves, priests might instruct them to use their franchise properly and place men in Parliament who would vote for good measures. They should instruct the people to abhor bribery or the sale of votes at elections, and to avoid calumnies, lies, and everything that would injure private character or disturb the public peace. But they ought not to prostitute their sacred character for merely party purposes, or use the Church and the altar as the battle ground of contending factions. In purely temporal matters the priest had no concern and could act only as a citizen. "If the State should infringe on the rights of the Church so as to hinder its free action in spiritual matters, then the priest, as religion and the peace of the Church are at stake, is to assume his sacred character, and to oppose by mild persuasion a misdirected legislation." When political questions touched upon the domain of religion, then the priest must defend his Church, under the direction of his bishops, with all prudence and charity. In mixed religious political questions a great prudence was required. A mutual good understanding between the Church and a Christian State would be right and would tend to the happiness of a Christian people. But a union of Church and State such as prevailed in England where the Church was the handmaid of the State and where

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statesmen through the Queen, whether in the Privy Council or out of it, had sovereign authority over the Church both in the appointments of its bishops and in its teachings, or such a union as Bismarck desired to establish between Church and State in Germany, was essentially wrong. The State in its temporal concerns should not be the handmaid of the Church, but the State should be under the directive influence of the Church established by the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The so-called union of Church and State had often resulted in the enslaving of the Church.

There was said to be a certain union between Church and State in Quebec because the clergy could collect their dues from the Catholic inhabitants by the assistance of the courts of law. Protestants, however, had no grievances to complain of under this head, and the immense majority of Catholics were satisfied to contribute to the support of their Church in this way. Besides, Catholics were not forced to remain in the Church. They could give notice of withdrawal at any time and escape these obligations. This, however, was no concern of the people of Upper Canada, and had nothing whatever to do with the Protestant population of either province. There was no injustice inflicted, nor any grievances without a remedy. Protestants might show extreme kindness in pitying the Catholics who were satisfied with the law as it existed, but their sympathies might perhaps be

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turned to better account. The Church enjoyed freedom in Canada, and the interest of religion was to maintain the authority of the State and to preach loyalty to our well-ordered government. There might be parties and difference of opinions, but all agreed in unbounded loyalty to the institutions of the country.¹

¹ Lecture in St. Michael's Cathedral, June 25th, 1876.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRIEST IN POLITICS

BYE-ELECTIONS in Charlevoix and in Chambly came very closely at the heels of the contest in Argenteuil, during which Mr. Huntington had made his appeal to the English-speaking electorate of Quebec to unite with the French-Canadian Liberals against undue clerical interference in political contests. Each election was marked by an extraordinary exhibition of clerical arrogance and a ruthless denunciation of the candidates of the Liberal party. M. Lussier, the curé of Boucherville, hesitated to read the joint letter of the bishops which declared the supremacy of the Church in civil affairs, for fear that it would excite dissent among his parishioners, but he was forced to submit by peremptory orders from the Bishop of Montreal. Dr. Fortier, the ministerial candidate in Chambly, announced himself a *Rouge* and a moderate Liberal; and the fact elicited this statement from Bishop Bourget: "Our Holy Father, the Pope, and after him the archbishop and bishops of this province, have declared that Catholic Liberalism is a thing to be regarded with the abhorrence with which one contemplates a pestilence; no Catholic is allowed to proclaim himself a moderate Liberal;

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consequently this moderate Liberal cannot be elected a representative by Catholics."

In Charlevoix, as in Chambly, the priests violently assailed the Liberal candidate and the Liberal party. Mr. Hector L. Langevin was the nominee of the Conservatives, and he was opposed by Mr. Tremblay in the Liberal interest. One priest denounced Catholic Liberals as "ravening wolves who come to raise a disturbance in the flock, who come to tell you that the Pope, the bishops, and the clergy have nothing to do with politics. Beware of their perverse teaching! they want to seclude the priests in the church and the vestry, in order to succeed better in their unchristian work, which is to scatter and divide the flock of Jesus Christ." He said to his people: "You greatly need to open your eyes, my brethren, on the abyss of evils into which the partisans of Catholic Liberalism would throw you." They should listen to the salutary teachings of the bishops in their pastoral letter upon the tendencies of the self-styled Catholic Liberal party. They should not allow themselves to be fascinated by the deceitful words of "the serpent Catholic Liberal." They knew in what manner the serpent found his way into the terrestrial paradise. In the same manner Catholic Liberalism wished to find its way into the paradise of the Church to lead its children to fall. "Be firm, my brethren. Our bishops tell us that it is no longer permitted to be conscientiously a Catholic

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Liberal; be careful never to taste the fruit of the tree Catholic Liberal." They were adjured to pay no attention to those priests who said the clergy were mistaken and were going too far. These were not their legitimate pastors. He knew that such letters were circulated purporting to have been written by priests in Quebec, but he called that not only undue influence, but also improper and unbecoming influence. "Beware," he said "of these false prophets who wish to bring disunion between you and your legitimate pastors. Do not listen to their falsehoods and their calumnies. Obey the Vicar of Jesus Christ condemning Catholic Liberalism."

Another priest warned his parishioners that to vote for a Liberal was to set out on the road to hell; and in a subsequent statement made to the archbishop, explanatory of what he had said in his sermons, he admitted that he had instructed the electors to "vote according to your conscience, enlightened by your superiors. Do not forget that the bishops of the province assure you that Liberalism resembles the serpent which crawls in the terrestrial paradise to procure the fall of the human race." He told his flock that "the Church condemns only what is evil, and as Liberalism has been condemned, Liberalism is evil; therefore you ought not to give your suffrages to a Liberal." A third priest intimated that whoever voted for the Liberals engaged in the service of

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hell. The curé of the parish of Baie St. Paul denounced the Liberals as false prophets and false Christs, and declared that they wished to walk in the blood of priests. He said: "They will do so much that they will unmask themselves, and will show themselves as they are, so as to leave no doubt as to their aim. There are some whose hearts are so black that if a religious persecution were to break out at this moment, they would be the first to hold the rope or the knife that would give us the death blow. In blaming and criticising as they do the word of God and of his ministers, in presence of their children, certain parents assume a terrible responsibility before God. When they will be dead and reduced to ashes they will have left children who perhaps will be ready to steep their hands in the blood of the priests, if ever a religious persecution breaks out."

One witness at the memorable election trial which followed this contest, said in evidence: "I was afraid that if I voted for Tremblay I should be damned." Another witness understood that one who voted for the Liberal party was guilty of a mortal sin, and if he should die in that state would not be entitled to the services of a priest. Another swore that the curé of St. Fidèle had declared from the pulpit that Catholic Liberalism and political Liberalism were one and the same thing, and that Liberalism was condemned by the bishops. One elector explained that he was old and

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would soon die, and therefore could not vote against the opinion of his curé. It was sworn that the curé of St. Hilarion declared from the pulpit that to vote for the Liberal party was to be against the curé, against the bishops, and against the Pope himself; that there were two banners to follow, the red one and the blue one; that the blue banner represented the Pope and the Church, and the red one represented Victor Emanuel and Garibaldi. "He explained to us," said this witness, "that the blue banner was that of the Conservative party and the red one that of the Liberal party." Out of the twelve curés and the two vicaires of the county eight curés and one vicaire were accused, and against seven curés and one vicaire evidence was produced.

Mr. Langevin's right to sit for Charlevoix was attacked in the courts, and mainly on account of the exercise of "undue influence" and "spiritual and temporal intimidation" in his behalf. The trial lasted for six weeks, and two hundred witnesses were examined. The defence sought to show that the priests spoke as citizens, and had not resorted to spiritual censures, and in any event were not amenable to the civil tribunals. On all points they were overborne by the weight of evidence. Judge Routhier, however, before whom the case was heard, refused to annul the election. He argued that the free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion, guaranteed at the conquest, established

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the ecclesiastical law of Rome in Quebec; that the court could not interfere with the liberty of Christian preaching; that voting was a moral act; and the priests therefore acted within their own proper domain. Thus he reasoned: "Immunity *de persona* is the real privilege of one's own competent court. It is personal, inherent in every ecclesiastic, and it consists in this, that the ecclesiastic cannot be accused or cited before any other than an ecclesiastical tribunal. This personal immunity of the priest extends to all cases of whatever nature, save with a few rare exceptions which it would take too long time to enumerate. Whether he acts as a priest or as a citizen in public life, or as an individual in private life, he is always an 'ecclesiastical person,' and as such he enjoys the privilege of the competent tribunal, that is, that he may object to the jurisdiction of any lay court." He continued: "Such is the Catholic doctrine, and I can explain it in a few words. I am incompetent in all cases in which the question to be decided appertains to dogmatic doctrine, morals, or discipline, and also in those where the person prosecuted is an ecclesiastic. I am competent to judge the acts of a priest in so far as they may affect the rights of third parties, provided these acts be of a temporal nature, and that the person of the priest is not involved." Religious preaching, he contended, was one of the most important parts of religion. It would not be free, if judges could decide that in certain cases it was

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liable to fine and imprisonment. Under such circumstances the religious liberty guaranteed by the Constitution would be a dead letter. He pointed out that the bishops of the province had addressed a pastoral letter to their flocks, strongly condemning Catholic Liberalism, and claiming for the clergy free intervention in politics. It was to fulfil this mission that the curés, “while explaining and commenting on the pastoral letter of the bishops, denounced before the electors this condemned Liberalism.” He was not in a position to say whether the petitioner was a Liberal in the sense condemned by the clergy, but the priest could not abstain from denouncing Liberalism when that duty was imposed upon him by his ecclesiastical superiors. If he maintained the demands of the petitioner he would be obliged to suppress all the condemnations of Liberalism and of Liberals which were found in the pastoral letters, in the decrees of the Councils, and in the evangelical letters. Finally Judge Routhier declared: “It would be arbitrary to interdict the clergy from any intervention in politics, and it would be absurd to make this court judge of the merits of the candidates and of political parties, and of the orthodoxy of the doctrines preached by the priests and by the bishops.”

The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, and there upon the subject of undue influence, the defence maintained that ecclesiastics were answerable for their conduct only to their ecclesiastical

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superiors and to ecclesiastical tribunals; that no ecclesiastic could be summoned before a civil tribunal without leave from his ecclesiastical superior; and that "the Church alone has the right of judging within what limits, in what circumstances, and under what forms, the right of preaching should be used; otherwise civil society would encroach on religious society." But Judge Routhier's decision was reversed, and the election voided. Judgments were delivered by Mr. Justice Taschereau and Mr. Justice Ritchie. Judge Taschereau emphasized the fact that Mr. Langevin consented to become a candidate only on assurances that he would have the support of the clergy, and pointed out that during the contest he had had personal conferences with the clergy, had stated at public meetings that they were favourable to his candidature, and told the electors that they should take the advice of their pastors. The curés denounced the Liberal candidate, took part in the election with Mr. Langevin's consent, and therefore became his agents. The sermons preached in denunciation of the Liberal candidate created in the minds of many electors a dread of committing grievous sin and being deprived of the sacraments. "There is here," Mr. Justice Taschereau said, "an exerting of undue influence of the worst kind, inasmuch as these threats and these declarations fell from the lips of the priests speaking from the pulpit in the name of religion, and were addressed to persons ill-instructed and

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generally well-disposed to follow the counsels of their curés." The sermons probably had small influence on the intelligent and instructed portion of the electorate, but must have influenced the majority of persons void of instruction. It was clear, he thought, that a general system of intimidation had been practised, and that the electors were not free in the exercise of the franchise.

Mr. Justice Taschereau also dealt with the claim of clerical immunity which had been set up in behalf of the offending curés. He said: "The tribunal which is to take cognizance of the contestation of an election is indicated by law," but as for the ecclesiastical tribunal, "for me it is intangible, non-existent in this country, being incapable of existing effectively therein, but by the joint action of the episcopacy and of the civil power, or by the mutual consent of the parties interested; and in the latter case it would be only in the form of a conventional arbitration, which would be binding on no one but the parties themselves. If this tribunal exists, I am not aware that it has any code of law or procedure; it would have no power to summon the parties and the witnesses, nor to execute its judgments. And if it existed, it would be very singular to see the Jew seeking at the hands of a Catholic bishop the justice he can claim from the civil tribunals, and submitting to corporeal punishment adjudged by that tribunal; and the same might be said of any other individual belonging

to a different religion." He could not admit the extraordinary opinion that a Catholic priest, speaking from the pulpit, might defame whomsoever he pleased, and then shelter himself from responsibility by pleading immunity. "The law," he declared, "expressly forbids all undue influence, from whatsoever source it may arise, and without any distinction."

Mr. Justice Ritchie in his judgment said: "On the principles of common law, on the construction of the language of the act, of which we entertain no doubt, we cannot for a moment doubt that it is our duty to declare that undue spiritual influence is prohibited by statute." The clergyman, he proceeded, has no right in the pulpit or out by threatening any damage, temporal or spiritual, to restrain the liberty of a voter, so as to compel or frighten him into voting, or abstaining from voting, otherwise than as he freely wills.

Judges Casault, McGuire, and McCord in voiding the return of a Conservative to the Quebec Legislature for Bonaventure in 1876, unanimously decided that the clergy were at liberty to express their opinions on political questions, but that the menace of spiritual penalties constituted undue influence. Judge Casault, one of the Catholic judges who tried this case, argued that all the freedom guaranteed to the Roman Catholic Church in Canada by the Treaty of Paris must be understood and interpreted by the concluding clause of the fourth

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article of that treaty: "His Britannic Majesty on his side consents to accord freedom of the Catholic religion to the inhabitants of Canada. He will, in consequence, give the most effectual orders that his new Roman Catholic subjects may practise their religious worship according to the rites of the Church of Rome in so far as the laws of England will permit." This was to say that the Catholic religion was not above British law, and that the Treaty of 1763 gave to the authorities of the Catholic Church no rights incompatible with the laws of England. The judges made it plain also that the Conservative candidate had endorsed and adopted all that was said by the priests during the contest, and that they thus became his agents; but intimated that without reasonable proof of agency no candidate could be held responsible for the utterances of the clergy, or even for the attempted exercise of spiritual intimidation. In this case, however, the Conservative candidate suffered the severe sentence of disqualification, as the Judges found, "that these fraudulent manœuvres were practised with his knowledge and consent."

There was murmuring and protest by certain of the bishops against these judgments. The Bishop of Rimouski particularly denounced the judgment of Mr. Justice Casault. He condemned as false and contrary to the teachings of the Church the following propositions: (1) That Parliament is omnipotent and competent to pass all laws even if opposed to

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the exercise of religion; (2) That the liberty of electors should be absolute; (3) That it is for the civil courts to repress the abuses which may occur in preaching and the refusal of the sacraments; (4) That the threat of the refusal of the sacraments with regard to elections is an undue influence, a fraudulent manoeuvre within the competence of the civil courts; (5) That an unjust oath should be observed. Bishop Langevin also appealed to Archbishop Taschereau of Quebec to have Judge Casault deposed from his law professorship in Laval University of which the archbishop was Chancellor. The demand was referred to Rome, and a decision in favour of the judge returned. Some months before, Rome had reported adversely on the project of the Ultramontanes to establish a rival to Laval at Montreal. In September, 1876, a papal bull was sent out and promulgated by the archbishop, granting canonical establishment to Laval, and endorsing its doctrines and practices.

Other evidence indicative of the archbishop's disapproval of the extreme demands of the Ultramontanes had appeared. He was probably influenced by the stern resistance offered by many French Liberals to the attempt of their spiritual guardians to destroy their freedom of political action. At any rate, on May 25th, 1876, the archbishop issued a pastoral letter which forbade the priests to discuss political questions in the church or at the church door, to volunteer advice on the subject of elections

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under any circumstances, or even to give political counsel while making pastoral visits or in attendance on the sick. It was understood that this pastoral, which seemed to limit the legitimate rights of the clergy, was issued in consequence of representations made to Rome against their attitude towards the Liberal party, or at least against the activity of the clergy in elections. A delegation was therefore despatched to Rome to make explanations and counter-representations.¹

The final result was a papal brief, dated September 13th, 1876, in which it is said: "We rejoice chiefly at the care you take to inculcate among the Canadian people sound doctrine, and to explain to them what regards the nature, the constitution, and the rights of the Church, the conception of which it is customary to present with great subtlety for the purpose of deceiving the faithful; and we have had to praise the zeal with which you have striven to forewarn the same people against the crafty errors of *Liberalisme* called *Catholique*, the more dangerous, that under an exterior appearance of piety they deceive many honest men, and that, tending to lead men away from the true doctrine, especially on questions which at first sight seem to concern rather the civil than the ecclesiastical power, they enfeeble the faith, break the unity,

¹ Mr. Tremblay, the Liberal candidate in Charlevoix, was one of those who made representations to the religious authorities against the political activity of the clergy.

divide the Catholic forces, and furnish very efficacious aid to the enemies of the Church, who teach the same errors, though with greater display and impudence, and insensibly lead men's minds to accept their perverse designs." This was held to constitute papal approval of the joint letter of 1875, and of all the menace, coercion, and intimidation practised under authority of that document; to set at defiance the assertion by the Canadian courts of the power of the law and the supremacy of the State; and to justify the unrelenting warfare of the Catholic ecclesiastics upon one of the great political organizations of Canada.

There was quoted from Sir Alexander Galt's pamphlet a reference to the position of Archbishop Lynch of Ontario. His attitude was in striking contrast to that of the ecclesiastical authorities of Quebec, and though vigorously condemned by the Ultramontanes, his utterance probably had a considerable effect in dampening the fires of religious animosity in the English provinces. On January 20th, 1876, he said in a letter to Mr. Mackenzie: "I think this an opportune time to inform you and your Government that priests in our arch-diocese are strictly forbidden to make the altar or pulpit of their churches the tribune of political harangues for or against any party or candidate for election, or to threaten any spiritual disability for voting with either party." The Prime Minister, in his reply said it was a fortunate

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circumstance that the form of the Canadian Constitution rendered it difficult if not impossible to bring questions of religion into the political arena where the subjects proper for debate were purely secular, and where, consequently, men of opposite religious views found no difficulty whatever in uniting in the conduct of public affairs.

It is not so clear as Mr. Mackenzie seemed to think, that "the form of the Canadian Constitution" has made it exceptionally difficult to bring questions of religion into the political arena. Such issues seem to be eternally present in our political contests, and more than once the battle has raged about the form, the spirit, and the intention of the Constitution. But at least it is easy to accept the admirable definition of Liberalism which Mr. Mackenzie set out in the concluding sentences of his letter to the archbishop: "The general principles," he said, "of the party of which I am the leader, are well known and thoroughly settled. They include the independence of Church and State; the amplest recognition of civil as well as religious liberty; and the accordance of impartial justice and equal rights to every individual, irrespective of his religious creed or his political faith." To these principles rather than to the "form of the Constitution" must we look for religious peace, and for the harmonious co-operation of all races and creeds in Canada.

The clerical opponents of the Liberal party, in

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defiance of the judgments of the Courts, persisted in the policy of intimidation and coercion. In November, 1876, Mr. Laflamme became Minister of Justice in the Mackenzie Government, and a new election in Jacques Cartier became necessary. Mr. Laflamme was an uncompromising *Rouge*. He had been connected with the *Institut Canadien*, and had always resisted the extreme pretensions of the Ultramontanes. He was, therefore, an inviting subject for attack. On the Sunday before the polling, the curé of L'Isle Bizard told his people that if they did not listen to the word of God through him they would be damned. He asked his congregation to remember that there had been two sudden deaths in the parish during the week, and to consider whether or not these people were prepared for judgment. "You," he said, "may also die suddenly, and are you going to prepare yourselves to meet your God, your sovereign Judge, by voting for the enemies of His Church." There were similar utterances in other parishes and in other constituencies as elections occurred, and, in fact, there was a general and determined adherence to the policy of clerical interference with the candidates of the Liberal party. Again appeals were made to Rome by Liberal Catholics; and finally Mgr. Conroy, Bishop of Armagh, was instructed by the Congregation of the Propaganda to proceed forthwith to Canada, and pronounce upon the attitude of the Canadian clergy. He made a thorough investigation into

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the conditions in Quebec, and pronounced a definite condemnation of the clerical antagonists of the Liberal party. He proclaimed that the two political parties were equal before the Church, and, acting under his instructions, the bishops on October 11th, 1877, issued a joint pastoral in which they said: "The decree of the fourth council of Quebec implicitly forbids you to teach in the pulpit or elsewhere that it is a sin to vote for such a candidate or such a political party; much more are you forbidden to announce that you will refuse the sacraments for this reason. From the pulpit you will never give your personal opinion."

But notwithstanding even the instructions of the apostolic delegate and the joint pastoral of the bishops, many priests were active in the general election of 1878, and ecclesiastical censure and intimidation were freely employed against Liberal candidates. In Berthier, particularly, the clerical politicians set authority and prudence alike at defiance. The Liberal candidate was a sound Catholic and an excellent citizen, and from every standpoint the audacious interference of the clergy was without excuse or justification. Nothing could be more painful to Liberal Catholics than appeal to the civil power against their spiritual superiors. It required courage of a high order openly to charge and openly to establish the unclerical practices and unconstitutional assumptions of the priests, and all who engaged in such proceedings were

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doubly exposed to the censures and anathemas of the ecclesiastics. But these sturdy French Liberals determined, while holding their faith inviolate, not to submit to clerical dictation nor to accept a less measure of political freedom than their Protestant fellow citizens enjoyed. They therefore protested the election on the ground of undue influence, and, as in Charlevoix, successfully established their contention before the judges.

It was shown that out of six curés of the parishes comprising the County of Berthier, five had used both the pulpit and the confessional in order to influence the electors against the Liberal candidate. They denounced the Liberal party as dangerous, anti-Catholic, and condemned by the Church; and told the electors that to vote for the Liberal candidate would be to endanger their salvation and to invite the refusal of the sacraments. One witness testified that a priest had said from the pulpit that out of thirteen or fourteen hundred communicants only five or six hundred were worthy of approaching the holy table. "If the head of the family has voted for the Liberals, the wife and children, like the head, are unworthy of coming to it." Another witness, whose son was temporarily deranged, went to his priest for spiritual counsel, and was told that he had always been a Liberal, and therefore always disobedient, and that in order to obtain the healing of Providence he must make a sacrifice and vote Conservative, as well as increase his contribu-

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tions to the Church. A third witness swore that he was not permitted to make his Easter communion, because he persisted in voting for the Liberal candidate. Still another elector was told by his curé: "If you want to go to hell you have a fine chance. Go and vote on the Liberal side." Liberals were denounced as the children of the devil and the children of the demon. One curé said in the course of his sermon that "the Liberal party was the party that resembled the fire of hell in colour." A witness said that after his confession the priest told him to go to hell with his party. Another testified that the priest "told us that the Liberal party was a party condemned by the Church, and he compared the Liberals to eggs that were put under a hen to be hatched, when the chicks did not come out of the shell. He said that they were like addled eggs, and had a rotten heart." A Catholic writer has said: "A sincere Catholic, jealous of the honour of his religion and of his rights as a citizen, cannot read the brochure which contains the facts proved in this case, without being profoundly humiliated."¹

These revelations brought from Rome an emphatic and energetic remonstrance expressed in language which could not be misunderstood. The Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, over the signature of Jean, Cardinal Simeoni, declared that

¹ Mr. L. O. David's pamphlet on "The Canadian Clergy, their Mission and their Work." Page 47.

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it had come to their knowledge that in the Province of Quebec certain members of the clergy and of the lay body were continually interfering too much in political elections, and were using to this end, in some cases the pulpit, in others the newspapers and other publications. It was necessary that the bishops of Canada should be made to understand that the Holy See recognized perfectly the extreme gravity of the facts reported, and that the injury which the authority of the clergy and the holy ministry was suffering in consequence was particularly to be deplored. In order to repair such signal damage, it was especially necessary to extirpate the root of it. The cause of such grave inconveniences was to be found in the divisions of the bishops between themselves, not so much on the subject of political matters, as on the subject of other matters which were being agitated at the moment in Canada. In order to put an end to these very regrettable dissensions, it would be necessary that the bishops, by common consent with the Apostolic Delegate despatched to Canada, should come to an understanding in order to determine a common line of action to be followed by each and all of them in regard to the political parties. Another cause of the same inconveniences was to be found in the too great interference of the clergy in political affairs without having sufficient regard for pastoral discretion. The remedy adapted to this excess of zeal was to recall to these bishops what had already

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been recommended to them by the Supreme Congregation on Wednesday, July 29th, 1874, namely, that on the occasion of political elections they conform themselves, in their advice to the electors, to that which was laid down in the provincial council of 1868. It would be necessary to add that the Church, in condemning Liberalism, did not intend to strike each and every political party which happened to be called Liberal, since the decisions of the Church related to certain errors opposed to the Catholic doctrine, and not to a certain political party, no matter how constituted; and that, consequently, those did wrong who, without other foundation, declared one of the political parties of Canada to be condemned by the Church, the party, namely, called "Reform," a party warmly supported formerly by some of the bishops even. It would be necessary also to exhort the bishops to observe in relation to political affairs the greatest reserve, paying especial regard to the danger which existed of provoking to a violent war against the Church, the Protestants, who were already restless and irritated against the clergy under pretense of undue interference in political elections. Further, it was necessary to make provision that the clergy should always avoid naming any persons in the pulpit, all the more so if it were to discredit them on the occasion of the elections; and should not use the ministry of the Church for particular ends, unless when the candidates

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might become hurtful to the true interests of the Church.

Mr. L. O. David, in his pamphlet on "The Canadian Clergy, their Mission and their Work," which was issued in 1896, and was put under condemnation by the Sacred Congregation of the Index at Rome, has said: "It was time for Rome to speak, for a large number of priests, and even some bishops, were accused of being stricken more or less by the terrible evil, Liberal Catholicism. In the bitter discussion aroused by the division of parishes, the Catholic Programme, and the establishment of a branch of Laval University at Montreal, the Conservatives were divided, and finished by mutually accusing themselves of being Liberal Catholics. If Rome had not interfered, all the clergy would have passed over, and there would have been in this country nothing but suspected Catholics. Conservative papers were then seen to claim the right of differing in opinion with their bishops in writings of a violence which Liberals never equalled. When the Conservatives were gently opposed by the clergy, they replied with a vigour which clearly demonstrated that the day on which they would be denounced and ostracized like the Liberals, they would lose no time in forcing Rome to interfere in order to impose silence and abstention on the clergy in political matters."

One of the most remarkable incidents of this period was the publication of a pamphlet called

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*“La Source du Mal.”*¹ Undoubtedly of Ultramontane origin, its authorship has not been positively identified. It was, however, too frank even for the Ultramontanes, and was speedily suppressed. It is interesting, however, as revealing in bald and even vehement language, the intolerant spirit and the aggressive ends of Ultramontane policy. The pamphlet declares that : “All those who are at the head of the Liberal party in the Province of Quebec work with a persistent energy for the destruction of Catholicism. They want the separation of Church and State, and even assert the supremacy of the State ; they sow everywhere distrust of the clergy, whom they represent as greedy for wealth and power ; they maintain that law, when expressed by the will of the majority, is just and binding, even when in direct contradiction to ecclesiastical law ; they deny to the Church and to the Pope the right to interfere in political questions ; they claim the liberty of conscience, liberty of the press, and the liberty of doing everything in political matters ; they work with all their might, whilst apparently acting in concert with the bishops, when appointed members of the Board of Education by persons disposed to secularize education ; and they have already attained grand success in that direction.” These “impious Liberals” were kept at bay by the Conservatives, who were generally well-disposed, although tainted with Gallicanism and false notions

¹ This pamphlet, “The Source of Evil,” appeared in 1882.

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by reason of their defective education. "In our Parliamentary debates and struggles, Lower Canada would always have paralyzed the efforts of Protestant fanaticism and Upper Canada Orangeism, if all our French-Canadian representatives had been united to defend our true interests." But the Liberals, numerous enough in Parliament, had "constantly sided with our bitterest enemies." The clergy, however, continued to exercise a paramount influence on the people, and determined to enlighten the faithful and put them on their guard against those who claimed their suffrages in the name of Liberal ideas. "To annihilate the efforts of this terrible enemy, the Liberals worked with incredible energy and perseverance to bring Archbishop Taschereau to separate from his suffragans the other bishops." In this they succeeded because the archbishop was "anxious to save his popularity and be agreeable to his family, filled with Liberal ideas." He served the Liberals admirably by his circulars. Catholic Liberals claimed that they were unjustly judged as to their political alliances in Ontario. But, the pamphlet proceeded: "What we exact is that our representatives should ally themselves with those of Ontario who are most favourable to all our true interests, and particularly to our religious interests, and this is what the Conservatives have proved themselves to be. The Liberals have proved themselves to be quite the opposite." The doctrine of liberty of conscience and of the absolute authority

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of the State was proclaimed. By virtue of this principle, three political elections, Gaspé, Charlevoix, and Berthier, were annulled. This doctrine had been applied by three judges, two of whom were Catholics. They had held that they were bound to decide according to the law of the land, and to acknowledge no other law; and Mgr. Taschereau, in whose diocese "these horrors were enunciated," had allowed all this to pass unheeded. The free judgment of Protestantism had penetrated by the door which the so-called political Liberalism had opened.

Censure was pronounced upon the Gallican Seminary of Quebec and the liberal teachings of Laval University. Mr. Justice Taschereau, a brother of the Archbishop of Quebec, in reversing the judgment of Judge Routhier in the Charlevoix election, had "enunciated the most false and impious propositions." He had asserted that instructions given by the priest in the pulpit could really constitute undue influence, and had even gone so far as to say that the law of the land was the only rule for the courts in public matters. Mgr. Conroy "seems to have made every effort to destroy all that Pius IX. had stated in his allocutions and decrees on the subject of Liberalism and particularly Catholic Liberalism." He had pretended that one could vote for a Catholic Liberal and even for a downright infidel. Such a person was Mr. Rodolphe Laflamme, for whom Bishop Conroy had absolutely declared that it was allowable to vote. He had

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added that "Mr. Mackenzie, Prime Minister in the federal Government of 1877, supported by our Liberals, was equal to Sir John Macdonald supported by the Ultramontanes." But there was a great difference, and here was the proof: "Whenever Sir John Macdonald was the head of the Government, he called as Ministers to support him from the Province of Quebec, the most sincere and devoted Catholics, and whenever it was in his power he yielded to the Catholics in every question where they had an interest."¹ Hence it was concluded that the visit of Mgr. Conroy to Canada was a great misfortune. "His mission has made us retrograde immensely in the path of true progress." He had prepared horrible disasters which would befall in a short time if Providence did not come to the rescue. Finally it was insisted that the Holy See must interfere; that the Liberal errors pointed out by Pius IX. must be condemned for Canada; that the principles of Christian reform in education

¹ "Honest Conservatives will admit that there is no brighter and more redeeming feature in the political history of this country than the spectacle of the *Rouge* party struggling for years in a hopeless minority for the prevalence of a great political principle which had prevailed in France and England a hundred years ago; struggling for the enfranchisement of the people against the prejudice of the people themselves; against the temporal and spiritual weapons of the most powerful of ecclesiastical institutions, allied as the Church always has been in a most unnatural alliance with the English Protestant Conservative vote, which has enabled it to perpetuate the enslavement of the people. The British population cannot look back with anything of pride on the part it has played in the politics of this province. . . . The finger of scorn was pointed at every French Liberal at every parish

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must be maintained; that religious authority must be affirmed more particularly with respect to the visitation of the schools and the right to use in schools only such books as the religious authority approved; that the civil authority must be declared inferior and subject to the ecclesiastical; and the property formerly belonging to the Jesuits restored to the legitimate owners, and Montreal permitted to have its university so that it could organize it on a Catholic basis.

In the subsequent history of Quebec but few of these pretensions have prevailed. It may be that the Gallican principle has declined, and it is true that the Jesuits have secured compensation for their confiscated estates. But the civil authority has not been subordinated to the ecclesiastical, spiritual intimidation in elections has obtained no legal sanction, education is less subject to clerical control, political Liberalism has waxed strong, and the long and resolute attempt to establish an Ultramontane university at Montreal has ended in a triumph for Laval.

church when he came to mass, and the consequence was that many of them were driven out of the Church, and in their forced antagonism with the clergy were denounced as bad Catholics. These men were Liberals at a time when it required a very high order of moral courage in a French Canadian to avow himself a Liberal. Had it not been for clerical interference the title of *Rouge* would not have been a title of opprobrium, and men like Doutre would have remained good churchmen, and other able and conspicuous men would still have been eminent in public life, and still within the pale.”—A. H. G. (a Quebec Liberal), in the *Toronto Mail*, May 23rd, 1888.

CHAPTER XII

POLITICAL LIBERALISM

ON June 26th, 1877, three months before he entered the Government, and at the height of the Ultramontane reaction, Mr. Laurier spoke at Quebec in explanation and defence of "Political Liberalism." Under all the circumstances, no more courageous, more powerful, or more admirably balanced deliverance has ever been made from the platform in Canada. He evaded nothing, neither set down aught in malice, nor shrank at any point from the legitimate conclusion of his argument. The address was delivered in the Academy of Music, and under the auspices of the *Club Canadien*, which was, although its title conveys no party significance, an organization of young, active, and aggressive French Liberals. The audience was one of the best that could be collected in the old French capital. A contemporary writer has said that "they came from all parts, from all districts, even from St. Hyacinthe and Montreal, to assist at this unique demonstration, and the spectacle was as imposing as it was instructive."¹ Two thousand persons were crowded into a hall which could

¹ From a political pamphlet of the day containing Mr. Laurier's address on Political Liberalism.

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give comfortable accommodation to only twelve hundred. The main entrance, not less than twenty feet wide, had to be left open, and every foot of standing room on the steps, on the platform, and in the corridors was occupied.

Among Liberals there was profound anxiety for the successful issue of the event. It was felt that this performance might mar, even if it could not make the orator's career, and that the whole situation was hedged about with dangers and difficulties. He had to face the frowning front of the authorities of his Church, to respect the conservative instincts of the English-speaking people of his province, to consider the racial sensitiveness and religious feeling of the French Canadians, and to command the favourable judgment of the great body of Liberals throughout Canada. This was surely no light task, and the orator was manifestly conscious of the gravity of the occasion. He was deathly pale when he came upon the platform, and as he stood up he searched the faces of his audience with grave deliberation before he uttered a word. Slowly and impressively he spoke his first sentences, feeling for the temper of the meeting, and watching for the first symptoms of approval or dissent. Interest deepened in the faces of the multitude before him ; passed into the steady glow of sympathy ; kindled into enthusiasm, and broke into cheering. Then the pallor passed from his countenance. His rich voice rang

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out full and strong. He went on triumphantly, the absolute master of his audience and of himself, and scored that night as signal a triumph as ever was won by a Canadian orator. There is courage in the speech, and argument, and eloquence, and literature. It reveals none of the tricks of the demagogue. It has nothing of party rancour, and nothing of pettiness. It exhibits no temper. It contains not one sentence that could be turned to the confusion of himself or his party, or employed to excite the meaner prejudices of any element of the population. Mr. Laurier is essentially an orator, and has achieved many later triumphs on the hustings and in Parliament, but it is doubtful if any other speech that he has made ranks above this that he pronounced at Quebec more than twenty-five years ago under such exceptionally delicate and difficult circumstances.

He faced the situation squarely at the outset. He said he did not deceive himself as to the position of the Liberal party in the Province of Quebec. He knew that it occupied a false position from the standpoint of public opinion. "I know," he said, "that in the eyes of a large number of my fellow-countrymen the Liberal party is a party composed of men of perverse doctrines and dangerous tendencies, pressing knowingly and deliberately towards revolution. I know that in the eyes of a portion of my fellow-countrymen the Liberal party is a party of men with upright intentions, perhaps,

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but victims and dupes of principles which are leading them unconsciously but fatally towards revolution. In fine, I know that in the eyes of another and not the least considerable portion, perhaps, of our people, Liberalism is a new form of evil, a heresy carrying with it its own condemnation."

The Liberal party, he said, had been more assailed than any other political party in the history of the country. Prejudices had been raised like a barrier between Liberals and public opinion. By one class of their opponents they had been calumniated in good faith; by another class they had been systematically slandered. The first duty of Liberals was to rally to their side all the friends of liberty who, before 1837 or after, had fought for responsible government, and who, when popular government was established, had been detached from the party through representations that the realization of Liberal ideas would lead to the destruction of the government thus established. The second point was to force the enemies of the Liberal party, who were at bottom enemies, more or less disguised, of liberty, to abandon their appeals to prejudices and fear, and come frankly before the people with their own ideas and acts.

All the charges made against the Liberal party could be crystallized into two propositions: (1) Liberalism is a new form of error, a heresy already virtually condemned by the head of the Church; (2) a Catholic cannot be a Liberal. He knew that

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Catholic Liberalism had been condemned by the head of the Church, but he insisted that Catholic Liberalism was not political Liberalism. "If it were true," he said, "that the ecclesiastical censures hurled against Catholic Liberalism should also apply to political Liberalism, this fact would constitute for us, French by origin and Catholics by religion, a state of things the consequences of which would be as strange as they would be painful." Under the Constitution, the French Canadians had not more rights or more privileges, but they had as many rights and as many privileges as the other elements which go to make up the Canadian family. The other elements of the population were divided into the Liberal party and the Conservative party. With convincing logic he proceeded: "If we who are Catholics are not to have the right to have our preferences, if we are not to have the right to belong to the Liberal party, one of two things must happen: either we would be obliged to abstain completely from taking any share in the management of the affairs of the State, and then the Constitution, that Constitution which was granted to us for our own protection, would be in our hands only a dead letter; or we would be obliged to take a part in the management of the affairs of the State under the direction and to the profit of the Conservative party, and then, our action being no longer free, the Constitution would again be in our hands a dead letter, and

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we would, in addition, have the ignominy of being regarded by the other members of the Canadian family composing the Conservative party as tools and slaves."

He argued that the Liberal idea was as old as the world, and was written on every page of the world's history. But it was only in our day, under representative institutions, that we had come to know its force and its law, and understand how to utilize it. "The system of representative government is the instrument which has revealed to the world the two principles, Liberal and Conservative, and by which we get from that form of government all its effects." Both Liberalism and Conservatism were susceptible of much good, as also of much evil. "The Conservative who defends his country's old institutions may do much good, as he also may do much evil if he be obstinate in maintaining abuses which have become intolerable. The Liberal who contends against these abuses, and who after long effort succeeds in extirpating them, may be a public benefactor; just as the Liberal who lays a rash hand on hallowed institutions may be a scourge, not only for his own country, but for humanity at large." He went on to say that "the principle of Liberalism is inherent in the very essence of our nature, in that desire of happiness with which we are all born into the world, which pursues us throughout life, and which is never completely gratified on this side of the grave. Our souls are immortal but our means

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are limited. We constantly gravitate towards an ideal which we never attain. We dream of good, but we never realize the best. We reach the goal we have proposed to ourselves only to discover new horizons opening up which we had not before even suspected. We rush on towards them, and those horizons, explored in their turn, reveal to us others, which lead us on ever further and further. And thus it will be as long as man is what he is, as long as the immortal soul inhabits a mortal body; his desires will be always vaster than his means, and his actions will never rise to the height of his conceptions. He is the real Sisyphus of the fable; his work, always finished, has always to be begun again."

He spoke with enthusiasm of the reforms achieved and the abuses corrected by the Liberal party of Great Britain, without shock, disturbance, or violence. "What," he said, "is grander than the history of the great English Liberal party during the present century. On its threshold looms up the figure of Fox, the wise, the generous Fox, espousing the cause of the oppressed. A little later comes O'Connell, claiming and obtaining for his co-religionists the rights and privileges of English subjects. He is helped in this work by all the Liberals of the three kingdoms, Grey, Brougham, Russell, Jeffrey, and a host of others. Then come, one after the other, the abolition of the ruling oligarchy, the repeal of the Corn Laws, the extension of the

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suffrage to the working classes, and lastly, to crown the whole, the disestablishment of the Church of England as the state religion in Ireland. And note well: the Liberals who carried out these successive reforms were not recruited from the middle classes only, but some of their most eminent leaders were recruited from the peerage of England. I know of no spectacle that reflects greater honour on humanity than the spectacle of these peers of England, these rich and powerful nobles, stubbornly fighting to eradicate a host of venerable abuses, and sacrificing their privileges with calm enthusiasm to make life easier and happier for a larger number of their fellow-beings." He quoted Macaulay's breathless and exultant account of the passage of the first Reform Bill in the British Parliament, and exclaimed: "Members of the *Club Canadien*, Liberals of the Province of Quebec, there are our models, there are our principles, there is our party!"

He passed on to say that the constitutional Liberals of Great Britain had neither sympathy nor fellowship with the revolutionaries of France, Italy, and Germany, who aimed at the destruction of modern society. He protested against the persevering attempts of the opponents of the Liberal party in Quebec to identify Canadian Liberals with the revolutionary elements of Europe. He pointed out that down to 1848 the great mass of French Canadians were embraced within the Liberal party, and that the Tory party represented but a feeble min-

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ority of the people. Lafontaine accepted the régime established in 1841. But when Papineau returned from exile he assailed the new order; and many young men of great talent and greater impetuosity of character, disappointed that they had come on the scene too late to stake their heads during the events of 1837, and among the foremost of Lafontaine's partisans in the struggle against Lord Metcalf, accepted the policy of Papineau, and soon went beyond their leader. They attacked the social as well as the political situation, and issued a programme of twenty-one articles, beginning with election of justices of the peace, and ending with annexation to the United States. The platform as a whole amounted to a revolution. The only excuse for these Liberals, he said, was their youth. The oldest of them was not more than twenty-two years of age. Besides, the situation in Canada and in Europe was favourable to such exaggerations, and these young enthusiasts, not content with the ambition to revolutionize their own country, greeted with transports each fresh revolution in the old world. They, however, had hardly taken two steps in life when they perceived their immense error, abandoned their organ *L'Avenir* to the demagogues, and sought in a new journal, *Le Pays*, with only partial success, the new path which should be taken by the friends of liberty under the new constitution. But, he said, "the harm was done. The clergy, alarmed at these proceedings

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which reminded them of the revolutionaries of Europe, at once declared merciless war on the new party. The English population, friendly to liberty, but also friendly to the maintenance of order, likewise ranged themselves against the new party, and during twenty-five years that party has remained in opposition, although to it belongs the honour of having taken the initiative in all the reforms accomplished during that period. It was in vain that it demanded and obtained the abolition of the seigniorial tenure. It was in vain that it demanded and obtained judicial decentralization. It was in vain that it was the first to give an impetus to the work of colonization. It was not credited with these wise reforms. It was in vain that those children, now grown into men, disavowed the rashness of their youth. It was in vain that the Conservative party made mistake after mistake. The generation of the Liberals of 1848 had almost entirely disappeared from the political scene ere the dawn of a new day began to break for the Liberal party. Since that time the party has received new accessions; calmer and more thoughtful ideas have prevailed in it; and as for the old programme, nothing whatever remains of its social side, while on the political side there remain only the principles of the English Liberal party."

Mr. Laurier went on to show that in consequence of the split between Papineau and Lafontaine, the fraction of the Liberal party which followed La-

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fontaine was finally absorbed by the Tory party of Upper Canada. The new party became the Liberal-Conservative party, and as the years passed fresh modifications ensued. Now some of its leaders would have the organization described as the Ultramontane or Catholic party. Its principles, like its name, had been modified. If Sir George Cartier were to come back to earth he would not know his party. Cartier was devoted to the principles of the British Constitution, while his successors rejected the principles of that Constitution as a concession to the spirit of evil. They understood neither their country nor their time. Their ideas were modelled on those of the reactionists of France. They sought to introduce ideas which were impossible of application in our state of society. "I accuse them of laboriously, and by misfortune too efficaciously, working to degrade religion to the simple proportions of a political party." It was, he said, the habit of the opponents of the Liberal party to accuse Liberals of irreligion, but for his part he had too much respect for the faith in which he was born ever to use it as the basis of a political organization. "You," he said, addressing the Conservative leaders in Quebec, "wish to organize a Catholic party. But have you not considered that if you have the misfortune to succeed, you will draw upon your country calamities of which it is impossible to foresee the consequences. You wish to organize all the Catholics into one party, without other bond, without

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other basis, than a common religion. But have you not reflected that by this very fact you will organize the Protestant population as a single party, and that then, instead of the peace and harmony now prevailing between the different elements of the Canadian population, you throw open the doors to war, a religious war, the most terrible of all wars." Again, he said, he accused Conservatives of not understanding either their country or their time.

It was also charged against Liberals that they loved liberty, and the tenor of his argument implies that it was sought to give a sinister meaning to the word as associated with the revolutionary upheavals of France. But while the French have had the name of liberty, they have not yet, he contended, had liberty itself; and he quoted as his ideal of freedom those stately verses of Tennyson which describe England as "the land where, girt with friends or foes, a man may speak the thing he will," where "freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent," where "faction seldom gathers head," and "the strength of some diffusive thought hath time and space to work and spread." But while Liberals were denounced as the friends of a dangerous liberty, it was also charged that they would deny to the Church the freedom to which it was entitled. It was not the fact, however, that Canadian Liberals desired to exclude the clergy from participation in political affairs. They had the right to approve or disapprove of public men and

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their measures. They had the right even to say that if a particular candidate were elected, religion would be endangered or the interests of the State imperilled. But this right was not unlimited. "The right of interference in politics finishes at the spot where it encroaches on the elector's independence." It was legitimate to change the opinion of the voter by persuasion or by argument, but if these failed and his mind remained unchanged, and then by intimidation or fraud men were forced to vote against their convictions, "the opinion which they express is not their opinion, and the Constitution is violated." Under such circumstances we would have not the government of the majority but the government of the minority, and, "if after each election the will expressed is not the real will of the country, once more you do violence to the Constitution, responsible government is no longer anything but an empty name, and, sooner or later, here as elsewhere, the pressure will culminate in explosion, violence, and ruin."

He knew there were persons who held that the clergy had the right to dictate to the people, but his answer was that we were here under the government of the Queen of England, and "under the authority of a Constitution which was granted to us as an act of justice," and the exercise of such authority was incompatible with the spirit of that Constitution. He was reared among priests, and among them he had some sincere friends, and to

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these at least he could say: "See if there is under the sun a happier country than ours; see if there is under the sun a country where the Catholic Church is freer or more privileged than it is here. Why then should you, by claiming rights incompatible with our state of society, expose this country to agitations, of which it is impossible to foresee the consequences." He said, in closing, that we in Canada were a free and happy people owing to the liberal institutions by which we were governed, and the policy of the Liberal party was to protect and spread those institutions and under their sway to develop the country's latent resources. "Forty years ago the country was in a state of feverish commotion, a prey to an agitation which a few months later broke out in rebellion. The British Crown was maintained in the country only by the force of powder and ball. And yet what were our predecessors seeking? They were asking for nothing more than the institutions which we have at present. Those institutions were granted to us and loyally applied, and see the result. The British flag floats over the old citadel of Quebec; it floats to-night over our heads, without a single English soldier in the country to defend it; its sole defence resting in the gratitude which we owe it for our freedom and the security which we have found under its folds."

Such a speech, frank, persuasive, luminous, and eloquent, could not fail to make a profound impres-

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sion throughout the country, and particularly to strike the imagination of the French Canadian people to whom it was chiefly addressed. While Mr. Laurier laboured to remove false impressions, to separate the Liberal party from the errors and excesses of the past, to establish its constitutional character and constitutional purposes, he still declared uncompromising resistance to the arrogant assumptions of the Ultramontanes, and boldly affirmed the right of the Catholic elector to control his own franchise, rest in his own judgment, and exercise all the freedom and authority of independent citizenship. Here he struck at the very root of clerical pretension, and calmly confronted influences before which even Cartier had succumbed, and which all men deemed invincible in the Province of Quebec. Here was the vital fact of the speech, and here the great merit of the performance.

“It was,” said a writer of the time, “a striking and vivid explanation of what are the true Liberal principles, so unknown, so distorted, so calumniated, and which it is vainly attempted to compare with the fatal lucubrations of European Liberalism.” Apart, said this writer, from the striking ovation which his countrymen had tendered to Mr. Laurier, they owed him a debt of gratitude. “They must recognize that he has eased the public conscience of the terrible doctrines sought to be imposed upon it, and which are a total denial of every

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constitutional principle; they are indebted to him for having opened a road and led the way, an inestimable boon for a people lost in doubt, and a prey to every uncertainty; they are indebted to him, in a word, for having recalled them to a love for Liberalism, the glorious and immortal feeling which has been the salvation of nations, and to which its enemies have rendered homage, in every age, by carrying out necessary reforms, and by acknowledging popular rights, against which they had long fought, but which are now inalienable.”

He proceeded to say, with astonishing frankness, when it is remembered that education in Quebec was chiefly in the hands of clerical agencies, that for French Canadians the events of the 26th of June were a subject of pride and proud encouragement. “Till now we were thought unfit for a parliamentary career, and with too good cause, for our education has little in its nature to give us the necessary temperament. Our conduct, under political circumstances, discloses this want in our education, while our press is almost solely occupied with frivolous quarrels or personalities, and seems to ignore this fact. But inexperience must not be confounded with inaptitude; and French Canadians showed on that ever memorable evening, the 26th of June, that they could, as well as their fellow countrymen of English origin, understand the working and appreciate the importance of repre-

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sentative institutions, when they are explained with the clearness, the luminous method, in the calm and eloquent argument, in a word, with the exactness which Mr. Laurier displayed throughout his lecture." The speech, it was argued, must tend to free politics from all coteries, and from the contemptible meanness which was the daily bread of parties and which quarrelled over trifles for mere transitory satisfaction. "We now know the route we are following; it does not lead us to revolutionary excesses. Liberalism is divested of its savage garb, of its anti-social and anti-religious character, and is seen in its true colours, the love of lawful and necessary liberty, of progressive freedom, which results from the natural conditions of progress, and not from sudden shocks which dangerous spirits would wish to impart to it. Such are the characteristics of Canadian Liberalism which Mr. Laurier has pointed out, and which we will endeavour in future to retain."¹

The clerical and Conservative organs energetically combatted Mr. Laurier's arguments, and especially assailed his contention that the pretensions of the Ultramontanes were inadmissible under the Canadian Constitution, and incompatible with the conditions of society which must obtain in a free country. *Le Nouveau Monde* attacked the speech as setting bounds to the liberty and authority of

¹ From a political pamphlet of the day containing Mr. Laurier's address on "Political Liberalism."

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the Church. It said that the revolutionary Liberals of Europe had invented criminal spiritual influence which was visited with prison and exile, and now Mr. Laurier had invented undue spiritual influence which was visited with fines and civil degradation. Mr. Laurier, *Le Nouveau Monde* explained, was not held to be a Liberal Catholic because of his attitude on the tariff or on the Canadian Pacific Railway, but because formerly in *Le Défricheur*, and now in this address, he had endeavoured to give to the State the right of defining the limits of Catholic preaching, and thereby placed the State above the Church. For these reasons he deserved to be called a Liberal Catholic, and to be opposed as such.

Le Courrier de St. Hyacinthe contended that the doctrine proclaimed by Mr. Laurier was the very same doctrine expressed by the judges of the Supreme Court in the controverted election of Charlevoix. Like the judges, he placed the supremacy of Parliament above the liberty of the Catholic Church. It pointed out that the bishops of the province, who were the natural custodians of Catholic doctrine, in a collective letter, had unanimously protested against the judgment of the Supreme Court, and especially condemned the argument of Mr. Justice Taschereau. Mr. Laurier was not ignorant of the action of the episcopal body, yet ventured to appear as an antagonist of the liberty of the Church, and to accept false in-

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terpretations of the Treaty of Paris, which secured to Catholics in Quebec the free exercise of their religion. He, in fact, placed the authority of the Queen, or of the Constitution, above the immutable and imperishable rights of the Church, and the civil society above the religious society. He had therefore damaged himself and the party to which he belonged. This journal particularly objected to Mr. Laurier's protest against the design to organize a Catholic party, and said: "This sentence, from the lips of a leader of a party, is very imprudent. How now, Mr. Laurier, entrusted as you were with a mission, with a task, by a large class of your countrymen, of asserting their principles, when you are called upon to explain the position of your party and meet the accusations of irreligion and of Catholic Liberalism made against it, can you have the audacity to reproach your adversaries with claiming their full rights as Catholics in the person of the priest?"

L'Union des Cantons de L'Est said that Mr. Laurier's speech was nothing less than a lesson to the bishops. He had dared to say that the right of dictating to the people at elections, claimed by the whole episcopal body and secured by treaties, was incompatible with our state of society. He had refused to rise in Parliament and make himself the interpreter of the bishops. He had the courage to fear the Protestants. He had the courage to think himself superior to the bishops, and to say so.

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He had the courage to tell the bishops that their course was calculated to provoke agitations and expose the country to consequences impossible to foretell. *Le Canadien* said it was just such a speech as opponents of the Liberal party wanted, but dared not hope for. It was the expression of the ideas of the Liberal party, and the speaker had dealt squarely with the subject. The gist of the speech was that the clergy should remain in the sanctuary, and that religion should not form the basis of any party. While ostensibly a plea in defence of Liberalism, it was a denunciation of Ultramontanism and of the authority of the clergy. The orator's purpose was to impress upon Protestants that the Conservative party was led by men who were under such subjection to the Pope that they could not respect the British Constitution. He, in fact, affirmed that they were the enemies of the Constitution. "Mr. Laurier we have long known to hold opinions completely radical. His lecture places him incontestably at the head of the Liberals who are anxious to go ahead. He acknowledged that he believes the time has come to walk fearlessly and with flying banners."

The Liberal press, however, received the speech with enthusiasm, and the French organs of the party stood out as boldly in defence of his utterances and in acceptance of his programme as the English journals which were naturally expected to welcome and commend the deliverance. *L'Union de St. Hyacinthe*

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described the speech as a masterpiece, and held that it was as remarkable for the depth and moderation of the ideas developed as for the polite and calm tone in which they were expressed. "This document," said *L'Union*, "is a manifesto for our party; it is the reaffirmation of principles which were forgotten; it is a new plan of a well-known field, the witness of many battles, but from which in the heat of the fight we had temporarily strayed away. Let us return to it; this plan is the salvation of the party, and will still lead us on to important conquests." *L'Évènement* said Mr. Laurier had made known the policy of the Liberal party in all its truth and candour. He had pointed out its tendencies and its real object. The party recognized its obligation to him, and was proud to have at its head a man of so much talent. Quoting from one of the Conservative journals the statement that it was desirable to organize a Catholic party and assemble all the Catholics under one banner, as they would thus be more numerous than by a mere union of French Canadians alone, *L'Évènement* proceeded: "Such a thought, at a time when Catholics enjoy a free measure of liberty, is a dangerous and vicious thought. The wish to divide Canada into two religious parties, Catholic and Protestant, would infallibly lead to terrible conflicts, in which we would undoubtedly be crushed, and in which we would lose forever the rights and privileges which it has cost us so much to obtain. This one declaration

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of the Conservative idea is sufficient to bring about its condemnation. Let the Conservatives leave to Europe this religious hate, and let them work for the future greatness of our country, free from all religious discord.”¹ *Le National* discussed at length the general attitude of the Liberal party towards the Catholic Church, and contended that the historical facts alone, even without Mr. Laurier’s brilliant logic, should be enough to convince every honest and unprejudiced mind that the Reform party did not in any way desire to deprive the Church of its rights, but on the contrary had always endeavoured to secure to it the full exercise thereof. Mr. Laurier had unmasked the enemies’ batteries, and the hypocrites who usurped the name of Conservatives had been irrevocably driven from one of their strongest positions.

The Montreal *Herald* characterized the speech as a masterpiece of diction. The young member for Drummond and Arthabaska, said *The Herald*, had already made for himself a national reputation as an orator, and anything that he might say either in English or in his mother tongue was sure to be said in a manner which left nothing to be desired. In this case he had fairly surpassed himself, and his exposition of the origin, progress, and aim of Liberalism in Canada, and his exposure of the hypo-

¹ The statement which *L’Événement* attacked appeared in *Le Courrier de St. Hyacinthe*, edited by P. B. de la Bruyère, always an earnest Ultramontane, and now, as for many years past, superintendent of Catholic education in Quebec.

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critical pretensions of its adversaries, formed one of the brightest chapters in the political literature of the day. The originality with which he treated the subject, the logic with which he reasoned out his course, and the strength of the positions which he occupied, all combined to make the speech one of the most forcible pleas for Liberalism ever advanced. The men who controlled the destinies of the Conservative party in Quebec relied for their support not upon the enlightening of the people, so that they might see clearly the course most beneficial to the country, but upon the intimidation of the electorate through clerical agents and the use of spiritual threats to prevent it from forming or expressing opinions. They had been strongly supported in their endeavour by the Ultramontane element in the Roman Catholic Church, and it was but natural that considerable effect had been produced upon the more ignorant portion of the population. Mr. Laurier had shown how utterly subversive to civil liberty were the doctrines of the Ultramontane school of politicians, how useless and valueless their general reception would render the Constitution, and how their promulgation was a menace to the safety and to the rights of all. The idea that a Catholic could not without renouncing his allegiance to his Church become a member of the Liberal party was, no doubt, one which if widely received would be of great advantage to Conservatives; but it was so utterly opposed to all

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truth and reason that it was surprising, not only that there were people stupid enough to believe it, but that there were people sufficiently audacious to seek to inculcate it. The reactionary writers condescended to no arguments, but continually denounced Liberals in politics as communists, revolutionaries, freethinkers, the enemies of God and of man. No charge of revolution or of irreligion could be too hard to hurl against their adversaries. As a matter of fact, however, the Liberals of Canada had as little in common with the ideas of the communists of Paris as with those of the corrupt Bonapartists through whose misrule the *commune* had its being. They were the descendants of the great Whig party of England, and of the old Liberal party in Canada, through whose noble efforts and sacrifices constitutional government in England and in Canada was established. These very French Canadians who were so frantic in their denunciations of Liberalism were the men who would have seen their compatriots as a conquered people, with no share in their own government, had it not been for the brave and eventually successful struggle for constitutional government made by the Liberal party in years gone by. They would like now to establish a practical despotism in Canada, and to hand over the government to the Ultramontane priests and politicians. As Mr. Laurier had said, they understood neither the country nor the epoch in which they lived. "The safety of our institutions depends

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upon the Liberal party, a party which is neither anti-religious nor anti-social as its adversaries pretend, which does not strive to increase its popularity by fanning the flames of sectional hatred, or arousing the prejudices of creed as do those adversaries themselves, but which advocates and maintains those principles of civil and religious freedom essential to our constitutional form of government."

The Montreal *Witness*, which had long waged a strenuous war against the Ultramontanes, and had stood always in the forefront of the battle for civil freedom, declared that a master mind had appeared upon the scene. The speech seemed likely to prove an event of no small magnitude in its influence upon political affairs in Quebec. It was many years since a French Canadian public man had given to the country a statesmanlike address on public affairs. The repressive influence of clericalism had for a long time discouraged and prevented any really honest and comprehensive treatment of those great political principles which underlie our system of government. Mr. Laurier had broken the monotony, and the results promised to be as wholesome as the event was novel. He was not afraid to call himself a Liberal. He seemed rather to glory in the name than otherwise; and the picture he gave of the achievements of the Liberal party on behalf of the people in England and in Canada ought to put new spirit into the backsliders

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of his own party. It remained to be seen whether "the renegade section of the Liberal party" would renounce Mr. Laurier as too extreme and impractical, or whether his noble and courageous stand would have the effect of inspiring them with some part of their lost manhood. *The Witness* continued: "It is the habit for the French Liberals of to-day to disown all sympathy with, or responsibility for, the policy of the young Liberals of 1848, who published the *Avenir*, and later advocated their principles, considerably modified, in the *Pays*. Mr. Laurier has fallen into the habit, and in his reference to them we think he has scarcely done them justice. Admitted that some of their schemes, such as annual parliaments and annexation, were ill-judged and chimerical, the main features of their programme were indisputably just and patriotic, and in harmony with the principles of the English Liberal party. Secular education provided by the State for all children, and separation of Church and State, are doctrines of the leading English Liberals; they are doctrines of the Liberals in every country; and we have not the slightest doubt that they are held by every intelligent French Canadian Liberal in his *for intérieur*. The talented and earnest young patriots who openly advocated these doctrines thirty years ago, who founded *L'Institut Canadien* and other centres of light for their fellow countrymen, were as noble men as this province ever produced; but in face of the tremendous reaction

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which has overwhelmed them, we are not surprised that even Mr. Laurier should have failed to do them justice."

With Mr. Laurier's general position, however, *The Witness* was well satisfied. He had made an unequivocal declaration against clerical intimidation in elections, and had warned the clergy that if they persisted in dictating to the people in political affairs, the result would be to deprive them of some of the privileges which were guaranteed them by the very Constitution they were striving to overthrow. The effect of the address had been to revive the spirits of the Liberals and to excite the Ultramontane press to greater violence of language than ever. The wise, calm, and generous declarations of Mr. Laurier were treated by the clericals as insults and defiance offered to the Church, and fresh appeals were made to Catholics to unite and put down the Liberal monster which was bent upon the destruction of everything sacred. The effect of these appeals upon the people of Quebec, *The Witness* argued, should convince the Liberals that the first and most urgent reform required was popular education. This was doubtless also Mr. Laurier's opinion. He had spoken to that effect in the provincial Legislature, and while the question did not come within the scope of his address at Quebec, there is ample evidence that he recognized as clearly as *The Witness* the necessity of an instructed democracy to the satisfactory and

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profitable working of free institutions. The speech at Quebec, however, was designed, not to force a quarrel with the Catholic hierarchy, but to remove suspicions and overcome misunderstandings, and to assert broadly, but unequivocally, the right of the Catholic layman to free and independent citizenship under the Constitution. If he had cumbered the speech with many issues, and marked out lines of division for the future, he would have succeeded only in raising new foes in his path, and putting fresh weapons into the hands of his opponents. His purpose was, not to declare a political programme, but to illuminate and expose an actual situation, and clear the ground for the conflicts of the future.¹

¹The writer of "Current Events" in the *Canadian Monthly* for October, 1877, said: "The able speech of M. Laurier at Quebec is a landmark in the history of party; he is a young man not yet thirty-six years of age, but there are no signs of crudity or juvenility in his party manifesto. Tracing the history of those with whom he has acted, he marks with precision every stage of its development, and clearly defines the position they now occupy. The principles he lays down are such as no lover of civil and religious liberty, in an English sense of the phrase, can hesitate to sanction. The only issue upon which the electorate of Quebec is divided, is that of illegal influence by the clergy, and upon that M. Laurier gives no uncertain sound. He is above all things a friend of freedom, at once from State oppression and ecclesiastical encroachment. The gradual change in tone which has come over Liberalism in Quebec has been a result, partly of the mellowing influence of time, and partly of the reactionary policy of the Ultramontanes. In the one case, the alteration has been for the better; in the other, unmistakably for the worse. The Liberal party has emerged from the mists of revolutionary theory to the clear and steady light of British constitutionalism, whilst their opponents have

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More than three hundred pages of the Hansard of 1878 are devoted to the debate on the Address, and much of the discussion centred on Mr. Laurier's speech at Quebec and the relations between the Catholic ecclesiastics and the Conservative party. A general election was imminent, and every question likely to disturb and excite the people was energetically canvassed by the warring parliamentarians. Mr. Masson attacked Mr. Laurier, but in discreet and guarded language. He did not venture in Parliament to adopt the tone of the clerical press, or to advance the extravagant claims of the Ultramontanes to supreme and final authority in civil affairs. He described Mr. Laurier as an honour

sunk deeper and deeper into the fetid and murky slough of absolutism. The cause of tyranny, political as well as ecclesiastical, is theirs, all the world over. To speak of but one instance, it may be fairly doubted whether the Count of Chambord can boast of as many supporters in France as are to be found in the Province of Quebec. From the time when M. Laurier delivered his lecture up to this moment, the newspaper war has been going on with increasing virulence on the part of the reactionary press. It is in vain, however, that the clerical press strives to expose the inconsistency of its opponents; whatever it may say, it is the inconsistency of progress and development, not that which creeps on in the downward course of decrepitude and decay—a step from youth to manhood, not a tottering descent on the slope towards the grave. The principles of Papineau are not those of modern Liberalism; yet, on the other hand, the views and policy of Lafontaine, and even of Cartier, were still more dissimilar to the Quebec Conservatism of to-day. It may be that the hierarchy will be able to force the elections there in its own interests; if so, it will at once cut off the province from political communion and sympathy with the rest of the Dominion, and possibly arouse once more the ill-omened spectre of fanatical bigotry.”

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to his party, and admitted that he had deserved to be elected in Drummond and Arthabaska, and probably would have been elected if he had not entered the Government. He, however, resented the young Minister's statement that the Conservatives of Quebec sought to create a Catholic party, and had cast away the principles of the British Constitution to which Cartier was devoted. He contended that he had always objected to politicians speaking of religion on the hustings. It was a disgrace to drag such a question into party controversy. The proper place to speak of religion was in the churches.¹ Mr. Laurier, however, adhered to the position he had taken at Quebec, and showed how utterly Mr. Masson's argument in Parliament was condemned by the Ultramontane press and the practices of his party in the constituencies. He insisted that for many years the policy of the Conservatives was to represent the Liberals of Quebec as a party of infidels and heretics. "The only battle ground upon which they ever attacked the Liberals before their constituents had been that ground and no other."² Mr. Laflamme, who could speak from longer experience and with equal authority, told Parliament that for many years the Conservative party of Quebec had made of every question a religious question. "Every political question was characterized on one side as a holy question ;

¹ Hansard, February 11th, 1878, pages 45-46 ; 76.

² Hansard, February 11th, 1878, page 55.

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and on the opposite side, those who contested it, who denied the truth of it, were put down as infidels and as people who had no other object in view but the subversion of everything that was sacred ; and religion, order, and society were to be completely upset if the Liberal party were allowed to reach the treasury benches. This was the principle upon which the politics of the country in the Province of Quebec had been treated. There never was, to his knowledge, one contested election where there was a warm contest, but the clergy, and the papers which denominated themselves the organs of the clergy, declared that no man could vote conscientiously or without compromising his eternal salvation if he did not support the Conservatives.”¹ But perhaps the most spirited and aggressive speech of the debate was made by Dr. Fréchette. He charged that for twenty-five years the Liberals of Quebec had had to answer on the hustings and in the press accusations and charges, not against their political creed, but against their religious convictions. Their opponents were always hidden “behind the altar and the priest,” and yet they now came before Parliament, and in order to calm the alarm that might have been raised in the minds of Protestants by their fanaticism, said they never used religion as a political tool. He shocked the decorum of Parliament and angered his adversaries by declaring bluntly that the men

¹ Hansard, February 11th, 1878, page 73.

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who uttered these denials were guilty of deliberate untruth.¹

But the allies of the Ultramontanes were manifestly reluctant to defend their principles, or at least their practices, on the floor of Parliament. Their speeches are full of evasion and denial, and marked by a moderate and conciliatory temper, in striking contrast to the furious devotion to the Church and fervent exaltation of the ecclesiastical order which characterized the utterances of their press in Quebec, and distinguished the proceedings of their incendiary agents in the French constituencies.² Probably many of the Conservative members from Quebec, while willing to profit by clerical coercion were hardly more willing than the Liberals to uphold all the claims and sanction all the proceedings of the clergy, and so were content to make only such defence as was necessary to stay the growth of Protestant feeling in the English

¹ Hansard, February 15th, 1878, pages 263, 264.

² From 1854 to 1896 the Liberal party struggled in Quebec against most adverse circumstances. There were twelve English counties, and in four or five more the balance of power was held by the English, but 80 to 90 per cent. of the English voters were Tory. Against the Liberals were a powerful Administration and the most severe undue clerical influence. But, notwithstanding the combined influence of the English Tories and of the Ultramontanes, there were still fifteen or twenty Liberal counties in Quebec, and another fifteen to twenty counties lost by minorities ranging from 150 down to 20. So that, in spite of all these combinations, the two parties nearly divided the province. But in 1872 the Tories fell by their own corruption, and thereafter the Liberal gain was rational.—From an address by Senator Dandurand to the Reform Club of Montreal, December 30th, 1901.

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provinces. Besides, the floor of a British Parliament is not an advantageous position from which to defend ecclesiastical usurpation and tyranny. Outside of Quebec this issue hardly entered into the general election. In so far as it was a factor in the contest the Liberal party was adversely affected. Those whose chief business in politics was to maintain ecclesiastical ascendancy could be trusted to sacrifice all other considerations to that idea; but for the masses of the people in all great political contests one question alone absorbs attention. This question in the election of 1878 was the tariff; and no one in the English provinces who desired to vote for protection, however strong his theoretical devotion to the principles of civil and religious liberty, or however irreconcilably opposed to the claims and encroachments of Ultramontaniam, was likely to sink his preferences on the dominant issue in order to express condemnation of the conduct of the clerical allies of the protectionist leaders in Quebec.

CHAPTER XIII

IN OPPOSITION

NOW comes a long day of adversity for the Liberal party of Canada. On October 9th, 1878, Mr. Mackenzie and his colleagues resigned office, and the head of the first Liberal ministry under Confederation had passed to his honoured grave long before his party was enabled to regain the confidence of the people. As some one has aptly quoted, "neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us." But while for successive elections the Liberal party was to know unbroken defeat, it never became a mere political remnant, nor ever degenerated into a faction. It was always a powerful, aggressive, and thoroughly energized political organization; and during all the long period of its exclusion from office, the record is distinguished for patriotic endeavour and fruitful service to the commonwealth. No doubt the story has its errors and its blemishes, reveals occasional false steps, and covers seasons alike of exaggerated gloom and of fretful impatience. But the party always stood for a distinct and intelligible programme; and in the long and stubborn conflict to determine under the Constitution the due distribution of powers between the local

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and the federal authorities, these years of opposition witnessed a signal triumph of Liberal contentions and a signal vindication of Liberal principles. The great events which mark the period between Mr. Mackenzie's resignation of office and Mr. Laurier's election to the leadership of the Liberal party were the establishment of the system of protection, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the settlement of the north-western boundary of Ontario, the successful assertion of provincial authority over the issue of liquor licenses, the redistribution of constituencies in 1882, the adoption of the federal Franchise Act, the elimination by purchase of the monopoly provisions of the Canadian Pacific Railway charter, the North-West rebellion, and the negotiation of the abortive Fisheries Treaty between Canada and the United States. Many of these questions were of the first importance; and the political leaders who held office during this great creative and formative period, could not fail to leave an enduring impress upon Canadian history, fashion the character of many Canadian institutions, and appreciably affect the thought and spirit of the Canadian people.

One question which arose under the Mackenzie Administration reappeared in the session of 1879. A few months before the fall of the Liberal ministry at Ottawa, Mr. Letellier de St. Just, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, had dismissed the local Conservative Administration mainly on the grounds

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that the Quebec Ministers had shown contempt for his prerogative, had submitted measures to the Legislature without consulting the executive head, had appended his name to proclamations and other instruments without his knowledge, and generally had subjected him to unceremonious and contumelious treatment. Letellier had had an honourable career in the Legislature of united Canada, as well as in the new federal Parliament. Although the son of a private soldier, he had all the pride and spirit of the old *seigneurs*, combined with their social ease and chivalrous temperament, and just that exquisite sensitiveness which could not brook the studied contempt of his arbitrary and ungracious advisers. It was argued by many Conservatives that the federal Government was privy to the Lieutenant-Governor's proceedings against the provincial Ministers, and that his summary dismissal of his Cabinet was the culmination of a partisan plot to establish a Liberal Government in Quebec.¹ This, at least, has been successfully controverted. No one who examines the evidence furnished by Mr. Mackenzie's biographers

¹ "It is useless to deny that Mr. Letellier came to the administration with an exaggerated sense of his functions and powers; but what was worse still, he believed that he had, and he really did have, the countenance of the Mackenzie Ministry in his feeling and attitude toward his Cabinet, while he was egged on to hostilities by the rash counsels of George Brown and many other Upper Canada Reformers, as well as by the leading *Rouges* of his own province."—J. E. Collins, "Life and Times of Sir John Macdonald," page 423.

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can doubt that Letellier acted on his own sole responsibility, and that Mr. Mackenzie questioned the wisdom, if he could not admit the unconstitutionality of the Lieutenant-Governor's conduct.¹ Mr. Joly succeeded to the Premiership of Quebec, formed a Ministry, and accepted full responsibility for Letellier's action. This at least the Constitution required, and nothing short of this could even seem to legitimize the Lieutenant-Governor's position.

However, on April 11th, 1878, Sir John Macdonald brought on a motion in the House of Commons declaring "that the recent dismissal by the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec of his Ministers was, under the circumstances, unwise and subversive of the position accorded to the advisers of the Crown since the concession of the principle of responsible government to the British North American colonies." Mr. Laurier spoke on this motion, and argued substantially that while the will of the people must prevail, the Crown had its rights as well as the people. The best regulated state was that in which the rights of the Crown and the rights of the people were clearly defined and greatly respected. It was neither the duty nor the province of the central Parliament to criticize the conduct of Letellier. The adoption of the

¹ "The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, His Life and Times," by William Buckingham, private secretary, and the Hon. George W. Ross, pages 478 to 485.

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motion would be a direct invasion of the federal system. It was the federative system which gave to Quebec its autonomy, and the Dominion Government had no power to interfere with a question which affected the provincial constitution of Quebec alone. The people of Quebec had the remedy in their own hands. They could overthrow the present legal advisers of the Crown, and thereby effectually rebuke the Lieutenant-Governor. While it would be the duty of the Dominion Government to interfere in order to redress a wrong which the people could not themselves remedy, in this instance interference would be an invasion of the rights of the people of Quebec. Under all the circumstances, therefore, it was not for the federal Parliament to say whether the Lieutenant-Governor had acted judiciously or injudiciously, wisely or unwisely.¹

It is manifest throughout the debate that the federal Ministers were reluctant to justify Letellier's extreme exercise of his prerogative, and that Sir John Macdonald was equally reluctant to declare the absolute unconstitutionality of the Governor's action. His motion of 1878 did not go beyond the declaration that Letellier's conduct was unwise and subversive of the position accorded to the advisers of the Crown under the system of responsible government, and although directly challenged by Mr. Mackenzie he refused to enlarge the

¹ Hansard, April 11th, 1878.

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indictment. There is reason to think that Sir John Macdonald was not in absolute sympathy with the extreme policy of his Quebec allies, but was forced to bow to party exigencies, and consent against his own sounder judgment to the sacrifice of the Lieutenant-Governor.¹

The motion submitted to Parliament in 1879 was in the exact language of that offered by Sir John Macdonald during the previous session; but in this instance it was moved by Mr. Mousseau, whose active identification with the local politics of Quebec gave a thoroughly partisan character to the incident. Sir John Macdonald did not speak during this debate, while a supporter of the Government moved the previous question in order to shut off amendments from the Liberal benches. In the meantime, a general election had been held in Quebec, and the Joly Government, which had assumed the responsibility for Mr. Letellier's dismissal of his former advisers was sustained by the narrow majority of one. It was a doubtful triumph; but at least the people of Quebec had not positively condemned Letellier, and had, therefore, refused to ask for the intervention of the federal authorities. It was, of course, impossible that the Joly Government could live many months under such circumstances, but for the moment Mr. Joly could not be disturbed, and the federal Ministry had

¹ It has been thought remarkable that Mr. Pope's *Life of Sir John Macdonald* has no reference whatever to the dismissal of Letellier.

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neither constitutional nor popular warrant to justify the reversal of the judgment of a previous Parliament, and proceed to the forcible ejection of the executive head of a self-governing province.

Mr. Laurier, speaking to Mousseau's motion, said that if the Conservative party in Quebec had not been defeated, Letellier's opponents would not be seeking vengeance at the hands of the House of Commons. The fact that the appeal to the Commons was necessary was the best evidence that the result of the Quebec elections was to uphold the action of the Lieutenant-Governor. It was now proposed to substitute the will of the Dominion for the will of the Province of Quebec. If the conduct of the Lieutenant-Governor had been extraordinary, that of the Administration which he had dismissed was still more extraordinary. It had systematically trampled down the royal prerogative, and had struggled to substitute government by an oligarchy for government by the people. This oligarchy was itself ruled by rings whose greedy appetite had to be fed from the public treasury, while the treasury had to be replenished by the people at the price of their civil liberty. He argued at length that while the act of the Lieutenant-Governor might have been unwise, it was within the scope of his functions, and was covered by ministerial responsibility. We had, he contended, a federal and not a legislative form of government, and to force upon Quebec the judgment of a federal Ministry would be an invasion

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of the fundamental principle of Confederation.¹ But this reasoning availed nothing. It had been determined in advance that Letellier should be sacrificed, and Mousseau's motion was accordingly accepted by the Conservative majority in Parliament.²

Sir John Macdonald then recommended to Lord Lorne that Letellier should be removed from office. But the Governor-General did not give immediate effect to the mandate. It was announced that as he could find no precedents to guide him to a decision, and as the conclusion reached would settle for the future the relations between the federal and the provincial Governments so far as the office of Lieutenant-Governor was concerned, he deemed it expedient to ask instructions from the Imperial authorities. For a time it was thought that Lord Lorne had sought Imperial counsel in defiance of his Canadian advisers, and he was therefore violently attacked by the Conservative press and the Conservative politicians of Quebec. It transpired later that he had acted at the suggestion of the Canadian Government, and under all the circumstances was

¹ Hansard, March 12th, 1879.

² "Mr. Letellier's action was no doubt within the scope of his powers, but it was a most dangerous step. I was sorry he did not assign better reasons for it. The action of the electors saves him from popular condemnation, and having acted strictly within the scope of his powers, we could not recall him. I took the line in the House that we had no right to interfere with a Governor in the exercise of his constitutional functions by declaring his action to be either wise or unwise."—Letter from Mr. Mackenzie to a political friend, quoted in the Buckingham-Ross biography.

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clearly entitled to more chivalrous treatment than he received from the Administration. Whether Sir John Macdonald desired Imperial sanction for Letellier's dismissal, or hoped by appeal to the Home Government to thwart the design of his supporters from Quebec, cannot be finally settled until his biographer in some later volume discloses the inner history of this important constitutional incident.

The judgment of the Home Government, as voiced by the Colonial Secretary, was that: "The Lieutenant-Governor of a province has an indisputable right to dismiss his Ministers if from any cause he feels it incumbent upon him to do so." It was, however, pointed out that in the exercise of this right, as of any other of his functions, he should maintain the impartiality between rival political parties, which was essential to the proper performance of the duties of his office, and that for any action he might take he was directly responsible to the Governor-General. These and similar powers were intended to be exercised by the Governor-General, "by and with the advice of his Ministers," and though the position of a Governor-General would entitle his views to peculiar weight, yet the Imperial Government did not find anything in the circumstances which would justify him in departing, in this instance, from the general rule, and declining to follow the decided and sustained opinion of his Ministers, who were responsible for the peace and

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good government of the Dominion to the Parliament to which the cause assigned for the removal of a Lieutenant-Governor must be communicated.¹ This decision in both branches is probably sound; but it leaves no substantial constitutional power in the hands of the Governor-General, and gives no security to provincial Governors against the possible action of a hostile federal Ministry. If the ministry which Letellier dismissed had been restored to office at the ensuing elections, his resignation or removal from office would then have become necessary, and this fact was practically admitted by the Liberal leaders when the conduct of Letellier was under consideration. But since the Province of Quebec had failed to condemn his conduct, his dismissal by the federal Government was an arbitrary and revolutionary proceeding.

Twelve years later, Mr. Angers, who was Attorney-General in the Government which Letellier turned out of office, held the Lieutenant-Governorship of Quebec, and it became his privilege to dismiss the Mercier Government, and to call upon his old chief to form a new Administration. In this instance a Conservative Government held office at Ottawa, but the severity practised upon Mr. Letellier was not thought to be necessary in the case of Mr. Angers. The Governor was, of course, strongly attacked by the press and speakers of the

¹ See despatch of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

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Liberal party, but when the people of Quebec voted confidence in the Ministers to whose hands he had transferred the administration of affairs, the Liberal leaders in the House of Commons bowed to the popular judgment.

British Columbia furnishes a second instance of the dismissal of a Lieutenant-Governor, but under what is generally regarded as strictly constitutional conditions. In 1899, Mr. McInnes dismissed his advisers, and called upon the Hon. Joseph Martin, who could not pretend to have the confidence of a majority of the Legislature, to form a Government. Mr. Martin succeeded in this task, but only with great difficulty, and when he appealed to the constituencies, was decisively beaten. Mr. McInnes was therefore removed from office, and it does not seem that any other course was possible under the circumstances.

The facts go to show that a Lieutenant-Governor may at least have great power for mischief. Acting in collusion with a sympathetic Administration at Ottawa, he may produce very unsatisfactory relations between a provincial Government and the federal authority. It is doubtful if in any of the cases under consideration the interference of the executive head can be fully justified, and it is quite certain that official autocracy is inimical to the satisfactory working of free institutions. It will, however, be admitted that a Lieutenant-Governor should not be dismissed for less adequate cause than

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would involve the recall of a Governor-General. It will also be admitted that no Canadian Government would venture to treat the representative of the Crown in Canada, and no British Ministry would venture to treat the Sovereign, as Letellier was treated by the Deboucherville Government. A great meeting was held at Quebec to protest against Letellier's dismissal, at which Mr. Laurier was one of the chief speakers; but with the mass of Conservatives partisan considerations obscured the constitutional issue, and neither this noteworthy demonstration nor the protests made at other points in the province, seriously affected public opinion. Letellier's death occurred shortly after his dismissal, hastened perhaps by the humiliation and degradation to which he had been subjected; and a bad precedent was written down irrevocably in the constitutional history of the country.

There was nothing timid or equivocal in the tariff measure brought down by Sir Leonard Tilley as a result of the Conservative party's electoral victory in 1878. It was not a readjustment of the old tariff. It was distinct and unmitigated protection. The declared objects of its authors were to establish and maintain native industries, and to preserve the home market for Canadian manufacturers and producers. In order to accomplish these objects the duties on imports were materially increased, specific duties were substituted for *ad valorem* charges, and more stringent regulations to prevent

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undervaluation of goods coming in from other countries were adopted. The new tariff necessarily bore heavily on many lines of British imports, but this was incidental rather than deliberate. The chief design was to limit the importation of American products and American manufactures, and to encourage by high duties the growth or manufacture of such products in Canada. The tariff, however, contained a provision for limited reciprocity with the United States, under which the Canadian Government was empowered to admit animals and all natural products free of duty, when the authorities at Washington should consent to give free admission of similar Canadian products to the American markets.¹

The Liberal leaders in Parliament met the tariff with the arguments they had unsuccessfully employed to persuade the people to reject the

¹ Any or all of the following articles, that is to say, animals of all kinds, green fruit, hay, straw, bran, seeds of all kinds, vegetables (including potatoes and other roots), plants, trees, and shrubs, coal and coke, salt, hops, wheat, peas and beans, barley, rye, oats, Indian corn, buckwheat and all other grain, flour of wheat and flour of rye, Indian meal and oatmeal, and flour or meal of any other grain, butter, cheese, fish (salted or smoked), lard, tallow, meats (fresh, salted, or smoked), and lumber, may be imported into Canada free of duty, or at a less rate of duty than is provided by this Act upon proclamation of the Governor-in-Council, which may be issued whenever it appears to his satisfaction, that similar articles from Canada may be imported into the United States free of duty, or at a rate of duty not exceeding that payable on the same under such proclamation when imported into Canada.—Statutory offer of reciprocity in natural products in the Customs Act of 1879.

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protectionist policy of the Conservative party. They contended that protection was a departure from the economic policy of Great Britain, and was calculated to estrange Canada from the mother country. They laboured to show that protection was necessarily partial in its benefits, and must enrich a favoured class at the expense of the mass of the community. It was insisted that the farmers could not be protected, and that they must continue to sell their products in the world's markets, and pay increased prices to a league of home manufacturers protected against outside competition. Mr. Mackenzie said the effect of the protection introduced would be to degrade the working classes, build up the fortunes of a few manufacturers, and in a short time ruin even those manufacturers after they had accomplished the ruin of the working people. It was contended that the adoption of protection would create a business partnership between the Government and the protected interests, and so tend to corruption in elections, and to the dependence of the manufacturing classes upon the favour of Ministers.¹ Many Liberals doubted the wisdom of special tariff legislation against the United States, and were convinced that the cause

¹ "I have called a meeting of the leading supporters of the National Policy at the Queen's Hotel, Toronto, on June 6th, at 1.30 p.m. I particularly desire your presence at the meeting, as matters of great moment will be dealt with. Bring with you such friends of the N.P. as you may think it is desirable should be present."—Circular letter of Sir John Macdonald to the manufacturers, June 1st, 1882.

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of reciprocity would be seriously retarded by the new fiscal policy of the Canadian Government. These and many other arguments, with which all Canadians are perhaps even wearily familiar, were ably and persistently advanced by the Liberal Opposition against the Tilley tariff, and for many years thereafter were the warp and woof of our political literature. It is not impossible that the tariff issue was invested with exaggerated importance, and that other questions of equal concern to the people and less inimical to the stability of business conditions were overlooked, during the long enduring quarrel over the moral aspects and the national results of the policy of protection.

Mr. Laurier's speech in Committee of Ways and Means on the Tilley tariff was concerned mainly with the defence of the Liberals of Quebec against the many imputations of inconsistency and disloyalty alleged against them by Conservative speakers during the progress of the controversy. It is hard for a party, and particularly for a party in opposition, to maintain a moderate attitude. The Mackenzie Administration had taken definite ground against increase of customs taxation; the electoral contest of 1878 had turned upon that issue; and it was natural that the controversy should drift towards a direct conflict between the principles of free trade and the principles of protection. Mr. Laurier had never thought that absolute free trade was of possible application under the conditions

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which prevailed in Canada, and it was inevitable that many arguments advanced by his associates should go beyond the ground which he had always taken in the discussion of fiscal questions. He was bound to be confronted with the protectionist and separatist policy of Papineau, and his own declarations in favour of a moderate measure of protection for Canadian industries in the earlier stages of their development. But when he was charged with abandoning the policy of Papineau, he told his opponents that that policy was designed to sever the alliance between Canada and Great Britain, and was adopted during the struggle of the French Liberals to secure responsible government and constitutional liberty. When these concessions were granted, that policy was abandoned and ceased to have advocates in Canada until it was restored by the leader of the Conservative party. Papineau had never told the people that they would derive economic benefits from his policy, but rather that it involved sacrifice in order that liberty might be obtained. He reminded his opponents that Cartier was a rebel with a price set upon his head, but that when responsible government was secured, he became a loyal subject and the leader of the Conservative party. He quoted from a speech made by Cartier in 1871, in which he said: "Manufacturers often ask for protective duties. This is absurd; the same may be said of extreme free trade notions. If you do not pay duties to the Government upon manufactured goods, you

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must have recourse to direct taxation to make up for the loss out of the abolition of duties. With exaggerated protection you kill your foreign trade, as the Americans have done, and you must have recourse to direct taxation. We shall not commit such a folly. We have adopted the policy of a revenue tariff and not a protective tariff."

Mr. Laurier showed how the Conservative party had been driven by the manufacturers into the acceptance of protection, and denied that since 1841 the Liberal party had stood for a protectionist policy. It was not true that when the Liberal party of Quebec was reorganized in 1872 it had made protection one of the planks of its platform. There was in that platform no reference to a commercial programme except the demand for the right to regulate commercial relations with foreign countries so as to ensure the establishment of manufactures in Canada. He pointed out that there was a provision in the Tilley tariff for a measure of free trade with the Americans, but that this benefit was denied to England, and he declared that "this policy was injurious, and not only injurious in itself, but unworthy of the Canadian people towards the English people." He opposed the tariff also because it was a universal increase of taxation, disguised under the name of protection. While there would be an increase of taxation all round, there could not be an increase of labour all round. Either the tariff would or would not decrease importations.

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If it did not decrease importations, everything would be made dearer to the consumers, and there might not be a day's more labour in the country. If, on the other hand, importations were decreased, he admitted that while articles would be made dearer to the consumers, there would be more labour in the country. In some cases, however, labour would be destroyed, and particularly in connection with the shipping industry. Finally, he opposed the tariff because it introduced the abominable system of taxing all the necessities of the poor. Tea, sugar, bread, and clothing would be put under tribute; flour and coal were subjected to imposts, and he predicted that the mothers in Quebec cottages would curse the day that this tariff was introduced.¹

It is quite likely that we exaggerate the industrial effects of economic policies, and it is quite certain that we exaggerate the responsibility of governments for commercial conditions. It is vain to expect any general agreement as to the results of the operation of protection in Canada. But the fact stands that under the protectionist system our ratio of progress was the most unsatisfactory in all our history, and that the sounding prophecies of industrial prosperity and national growth which filled the mouths of the politicians by whom the system was imposed upon the country, had imperfect and inadequate realization. It is, however, fair to remember that during this period the West was

¹ Hansard, April 9th, 1879.

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passing through the initial stages of development. The ingoing settlers had to learn the nature of its soil, and the moods of its climate, and to determine the best processes of agriculture over an enormous area of new territory. During the same period, farming in the older provinces was passing through the long agony of low prices, facing still more hostile American tariffs, meeting the increasing competition of Argentina and Russia, and adapting itself with loss and pain and travail to the demands of the British market. These conditions Canada would have had to face in any event; and thus it is quite possible to exaggerate the evil effects of protection, even while it is recognized that it failed, and failed decisively, to meet the anticipations of its advocates, and burdened rather than benefited the great staple industries of the country.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PACIFIC RAILWAY

IN 1871 British Columbia was admitted into the Confederation. The chief feature of the contract was that which stipulated for the commencement within two, and the completion within ten years from the date of union, of a railway connecting the Pacific Ocean, through British territory, with the railway systems of Ontario and Quebec. The leaders of the Liberal party, while favourable to the admission of British Columbia, and by no means hostile to the construction of a transcontinental road across British territory, thought that to build the railway within the time specified would press too heavily upon the resources of the Dominion; and argued that it was enough to proceed with the surveys in the meantime, and subsequently with the work of construction, as the state of the finances would justify. These views, however, were rejected by Parliament, and the country was committed to the more heroic policy of the Conservative leaders.

Towards the close of the session of 1871, on the motion of Sir George Cartier, a resolution was adopted to give effect to the ministerial policy. This provided that the road should be built and

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operated by private enterprise, and not by the Government, and that such aid should be granted in lands and money as would not unduly press on the resources of the country, and as Parliament should thereafter determine. During the session of 1872 the Canadian Pacific Company, with Sir Hugh Allan at its head, and the Inter-Oceanic Company, organized by Sir David Macpherson, each proposing to undertake the construction of the railway, were granted charters by Parliament; and at the same time the Government took authority to negotiate for the amalgamation of the two companies, or to issue a royal charter to a new company. It was found impossible to effect an amalgamation, and the Government, therefore, formed under royal charter a company for the construction of the road, of which Sir Hugh Allan was president, and in which the several provinces of the Dominion were represented. The railway was a dominant issue in the general election of 1872. For the time the Government was sustained, but the discovery of Sir Hugh Allan's very heavy contributions to the Conservative campaign fund led to its early downfall. It was stated, however, in the Speech from the Throne, at the opening of the session during which the defeat of the Ministry was accomplished, that "The Canadian Pacific Railway Company, to whom a royal charter was granted, have been unable to make the financial arrangements necessary for the construction of that undertaking,

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and have therefore executed a surrender of their charter which has been accepted."

Mr. Mackenzie, who succeeded to the office of Premier on the resignation of Sir John Macdonald, in his address to the electors of Lambton, outlined the railway policy of his Government. He intimated that he would seek such a modification of the terms made with British Columbia as would "give time for the completion of the surveys, the acquisition of the information necessary to an intelligent apprehension of the work, and its prosecution with such speed and under such arrangements as the resources of the country will permit, without too largely increasing the burden of taxation on the people." In the meantime he would "utilize the enormous stretches of water communication which lie between a point not far from the Rocky Mountains and Fort Garry, and between Lake Superior and French River on the Georgian Bay, thus avoiding for the present the construction of about 1,300 miles of railway, estimated to cost from sixty to eighty millions of dollars, and rendering the resources of the country available for the prosecution of those links of the Pacific Railway which are necessary in order to form a complete line of rail and water communication from East to West." This, he pointed out,¹ would involve the construction of a short line of railway from the

¹ See Mr. Mackenzie's "Address to the Electors of Lambton," January, 1874.

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mouth of the French River on Georgian Bay to the south-east shore of Lake Nipissing, and a grant in aid of extension to that point of the existing and projected lines in Quebec and Ontario. He also pledged his Administration to the early construction of a branch line of railway from Fort Garry to Pembina.¹

In 1874 the Government obtained authority from Parliament to construct the railway as a public work, if it should so decide, and to divide the road into four sections, the first from Lake Nipissing to the west end of Lake Superior, the second from Lake Superior to Red River, the third from Red River to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and the fourth from the foot of the Rockies to the Pacific coast; or to arrange with contractors for the construction of the work on the basis of a subsidy per mile of \$10,000 in money and 20,000 acres of land, with four per cent. interest for twenty-five years on a sum to be stated in the contract. It was provided that the land should be of fair average quality, and in alternate sections, and the Government reserved the right to sell two-thirds of the

¹ "No Government that could be formed will carry on the work of construction more efficiently and speedily than will that of Mr. Mackenzie. It was the Reform party that first advocated the annexation of the North-West Territory, including British Columbia. It is among Reformers that are found the most enthusiastic supporters of the Pacific Railway. And it is by a Reform Government that the work must be carried to final completion. It is not the people of British Columbia, therefore, that have cause to regret the advent of Reformers to power." —*Toronto Globe*, February 13th, 1874.

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land grant at prices to be arranged with the contractors, to whom the proceeds of sales should be paid half-yearly. It was also provided, in case this plan of construction were adopted, that the contractors should own and operate the road, under regulations in respect of freight and passenger charges and the frequency of service; but that the Government should have the power to buy out the whole or any part of the road at a sum not exceeding ten per cent. above the actual cost, and subject to a deduction equal to the value of the land and money subsidies. It was, however, found impossible to induce capitalists to undertake the construction of the road on the terms proposed; and Mr. Mackenzie, under that clause of the Act which empowered the Government to construct the railway as a public work, placed under contract 114 miles from Selkirk eastward to Rat Portage, and 113 miles from Fort William westward to English River. The construction of the Pembina branch, from the international boundary to St. Boniface, was completed in the autumn of 1878, and railway communication with Winnipeg thus established. A telegraph line from Red River to Edmonton, covering 807 miles of country, was also erected during 1874 and 1875; and early in 1875 a contract was entered into for the erection of a telegraph line from Red River to the Lake Superior terminus of the projected railway.

In British Columbia progress with the great

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enterprise was less satisfactory. Unsuccessful attempts were made to negotiate with the provincial Government for an extension of the time for the construction of the transcontinental road "beyond that provided in the terms of union." Mr. J. D. Edgar visited the province as commissioner from the Dominion Government, and undertook to guarantee continuous construction and the expenditure on the road within the boundaries of the province of one million dollars annually until it was completed. The provincial Premier, however, refused to negotiate with Mr. Edgar until officially informed that he was specially accredited as the agent of the general Government. This was a purely factious objection, and indicated a spirit inimical to satisfactory negotiation. Finally, the provincial authorities appealed to the Imperial Government against the breach of the terms of union by Canada, and Lord Carnarvon offered to act as intermediary between the provincial and federal Governments. The offer was accepted, both by the province and by the Dominion, and the "Carnarvon terms" resulted.

These provided for the immediate construction of a line of railway from Nanaimo to Esquimault on Vancouver Island; the expenditure of a definite minimum amount on surveys on the mainland; the abandonment of the proposed wagon road across the Rocky Mountains; the postponement of the building of the telegraph line from the mountains

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to the Pacific until the route of the railway should be settled; compensation to the province for the delay, provided the surveys were not completed and construction commenced within the time to be agreed upon; the expenditure of at least two million dollars annually on construction until the road was finished; and the final completion of the work in the year 1890. A bill to give effect to this compromise was passed by the Commons during the session of 1875, but was thrown out by the Senate, acting under the influence of paltry partisan considerations, and thus a thoroughly satisfactory and statesmanlike settlement of the whole question was prevented. The Hon. Edward Blake must share with the Senate the responsibility for the rejection of the Carnarvon compromise. He voted against the bill to provide for the construction of the Nanaimo and Esquimault railway, gravely increased the disaffection among Liberals over the very onerous terms of the bargain with British Columbia, and developed by his attitude a temper in the House of Commons in face of which Mr. Mackenzie had practically no alternative but to abandon the Carnarvon settlement.

Mr. Blake, in fact, maintained an attitude of consistent and inflexible opposition to the fulfillment of the terms of union with British Columbia. In his speech at Aurora in 1874, in which occurs the reference to the Pacific province as a "sea of mountains," he said: "Speaking conjecturally, I am

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of the opinion that the British Columbia section of the railway, even if it turns out to be practicable as an engineering work, will involve an enormous expenditure, approximating to \$36,000,000, and after its completion will involve an enormous annual charge on the revenues of the country for its running expenses; and I doubt much if that section can be kept open after it is built. I think the chief advantage the British Columbians will derive from the enterprise will consist in the circulation of money and the profits of mercantile operations attendant on the construction, and that Canada will be a frightful loser by the affair." He declared that under all the circumstances, if British Columbia were to demand the construction of the road according to the terms, or claim the alternative of release from the Confederation, he would take the alternative. "If," he said, "these two thousand men understand that the people of Canada are prepared, in preference to the compliance with their ruinous demands, to let them go, and to leave them to build the Columbia section with their ten thousand people, their tone will be more moderate, and we shall hear no talk about secession. The principal person who has spoken of it hitherto is Sir John Macdonald, who almost invited it in his election speech during the late contest. They won't secede; they know better. Should they leave the Confederation, the Confederation would survive, and they would lose their money."

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In the Senate in 1876, Mr. Carrall, one of the delegates from British Columbia who arranged the terms of union with the federal Government, declared that among the strongest reasons which prompted other loyal Canadians, as well as himself, was that emissaries from the United States had come amongst them, and were pressing them to join the Republic. It had been said at Victoria by one of these agents that the policy of the United States in purchasing Alaska was to consummate the absorption of British Columbia. A delegation therefore visited Ottawa, and the conditions upon which British Columbia would become a part of the Dominion were arranged. He said that at that time Sir John Macdonald was at the point of death, and was not responsible personally for the terms of the contract into which his Cabinet entered. He reminded the Senate that he had stated on a previous occasion in the Chamber, and desired to repeat it now, and would appeal to the reporter to take down his words correctly, that ten years was not put into the terms of union as an absolute limit for the construction of the railway, but simply as a *bona fides* that the Government would commence the road and carry it on to completion as quickly as could be, without injury to the interests of the country.¹

Sir David Macpherson, in the same debate, said: "I believe the people of this Dominion from one

¹ Senate Debates, 1876, page 153.

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end to the other desire the construction of our great national railway, not in an extravagant manner; not before the means of the country would permit of its being constructed without inconvenience to the exchequer; not faster than the settlement of the country required; but as fast as the interests of the Dominion demanded.”¹ On March 31st, 1876, the Senate by 34 to 24, on motion of Mr. Dickey, affirmed that, “This House fully recognizes the obligation to secure the construction of the Canada Pacific Railway, with the utmost speed compatible with a due regard to the other financial requirements of the Dominion, and without unduly increasing the rate of taxation, and regrets that the course adopted by the Government in connection with this matter has not met the expectations of the people of British Columbia, nor has it been such as to facilitate the development of the North-West.”² On April 7th, 1876, the House of Commons declared that the arrangements for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway should be such as the resources of the country would permit without increasing the existing rates of taxation. For this proposition 149 votes were cast, as against only 10 in the negative. Among those voting for the proposition were Baby, Costigan, Desjardins, Kirkpatrick, Langevin, Masson, Mousseau, Ouimet, Plumb, and Robitaille—all men of

¹ Senate Debates, 1876, page 163.

² Senate Debates, 1876, pages 236 and 280.

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conspicuous position and exceptional influence in the Conservative party.¹

Mr. Blake's attitude on the Carnarvon compromise and the original compact with British Columbia, is clearly stated in a speech delivered in Parliament in 1880. He said: "During the session of 1875, when the Carnarvon correspondence was brought down, I did ask the leader of the then Government whether he proposed to invite the sanction of Parliament to the arrangement. He replied that he did not propose to invite the action of Parliament directly, but that he would rely on Parliament to enable him to carry it out. Well, that answer of itself indicated that the assent of Parliament was essential. Will anyone seriously contend that the executive Government of this country could, not merely without the authority of Parliament, but in spite of the anti-taxation resolution, make an agreement which would of itself bind the country to build the Island Railway, to expend not less than \$2,000,000 a year on construction in the mainland, and to finish the road by 1890? It was, however, soon made apparent that the action of Parliament was necessary in order to carry out the Carnarvon terms. A bill was of necessity brought in to authorize the construction of the Island Railway—one of the most important parts of those terms. I opposed that bill because I believed that the Island Railway was not a

¹ Hansard, 1876, pages 1,126-1,130.

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judicious undertaking, and also, and chiefly, because it was part of the Carnarvon terms, which I did not believe were such as could be fully carried out consistently with the taxation resolution, to which I for one was determined to adhere. . . . Shortly after the close of the session, I entered the Administration upon a distinct understanding in reference to the Pacific Railway. That understanding was that, the Carnarvon terms having failed by reason of the action of Parliament, a moderate money compensation should be offered to the province for past and future delays in the construction of the Pacific Railway; that it was always the understanding of the Government, and that it should be distinctly stated, that any pledge for fixed expenditure or for a time limit was subject to the taxation resolution, in such sort that the work should not be necessarily proceeded with in case it would involve an increase in taxation; and that any arrangement made with the province should be expressly, as it must in fact be, subject to the sanction of this Parliament.”¹

In the summer of 1876, Lord Dufferin visited British Columbia on a mission of conciliation. He was eager to be clothed with ministerial authority, and sought to wrest from his advisers a right of independent initiative in the adjustment of relations between the province and the Dominion. This demand Mr. Mackenzie strenuously and successfully

¹ Hansard, April 15th, 1880.

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resisted. There were, however, heated and angry interviews between the Governor and the Prime Minister, and for some time thereafter the personal relations between the two men were not quite satisfactory. But this, like other serious disagreements between Lord Dufferin and his Canadian advisers, was finally adjusted, and peace and mutual confidence restored. There is no doubt that this acute, able, and resourceful diplomat found it hard to accommodate himself to the limitations which surround the office of Governor of a self-governing commonwealth, and that he liberally interpreted and freely exercised all the authority which was covered by his commission from the Home Government. It is fair to add that, during the later years of his stay in Canada, he was on exceedingly cordial and intimate terms with Mr. Mackenzie; and when the Liberal Government met defeat, no one bore more generous testimony to the patriotism, integrity, and high-mindedness of its vanquished leader.

Only good resulted from Lord Dufferin's visit to British Columbia. His judicious presentation of the attitude of the Government and of older Canada, coupled with Mr. Mackenzie's energetic prosecution of the surveys, definite adoption of the Burrard Inlet route for the British Columbia section, and active construction of vital links of the railway, bred a more moderate temper in the Pacific province, and largely reconciled public opinion to the policy of the national Administration. This was the position

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of the great project when the Mackenzie Government was defeated and the Conservative party restored to office.

On May 10th, 1879, Sir Charles Tupper announced the railway policy of the new Government. It was set forth in the resolutions which he laid before Parliament that in view of the importance of keeping good faith with British Columbia and completing the consolidation of the Confederation of the provinces in British North America, and in consideration of the national character of the undertaking, the Government should seek the co-operation of the Imperial authorities by guarantee or otherwise.¹ It was proposed that 100,000,000 acres of land and such minerals as they contained should be appropriated for the purposes of construction. This land was to be vested in commissioners, and the Imperial Government was to be represented on the Commission. All the ungranted Dominion lands within twenty miles of the line of the road were to be set apart as a railway reserve, and the Commission was to be authorized to sell from time to time any portions thereof at the rate of not less than \$2 an acre, and was directed to invest the proceeds in Canadian Government securities, to be held exclusively for the purpose of meeting the cost of

¹ Reporting on a Pacific Railway Bill to the Canadian Legislature in 1851, the Railway Committee said: "Your Committee indulge a hope that the Imperial Government will be led to entertain the subject as one of national importance, and to combine with it a general and well organized system of colonization."

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construction. It was further declared that as it was desirable to combine the promotion of colonization with railway extension, the Government should be authorized to enter into a contract for the construction of a part of the road from the Red River westerly, running to the south of Lake Manitoba, with a branch to Winnipeg, and to expend \$1,000,000 on the work without submitting the contracts to Parliament. It was also held to be expedient before commencing the work of building in British Columbia, to make further explorations in order to guarantee the construction of the road through the largest extent of fertile territory. The selection of the Burrard Inlet terminus was condemned as premature; but in order to keep good faith with British Columbia, it was provided that so soon as further necessary explorations were made and the route determined, the Government should place 125 miles under contract in British Columbia without the further sanction of Parliament. These resolutions reversed the policy of Mackenzie in some essential features, and in concurrence were met with amendments affirming the general position of his Government on the various branches of the question, and declaring once again that the construction of the railway should not involve material increase in the rate of taxation.¹

¹ In a speech in the House of Commons, on March 18th, 1902, Sir Richard Cartwright said that the policy of Mr. Mackenzie had three

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But Parliament had not even yet evolved the proposition under which the Canadian Pacific Railway project was at length to be carried to success. Sir John Macdonald, Sir Charles Tupper, and Sir Leonard Tilley proceeded to England, but failed to secure direct Imperial aid or any Imperial guarantee of less direct support for the enterprise. This necessitated material modifications of the policy of 1879; and during the session of 1880, Sir Charles Tupper introduced resolutions providing that the 100,000,000 acres of land proposed to be vested in commissioners, and held at \$2 an acre, should be selected and reserved by order of the Governor-in-Council as railway lands, sold at prices to be fixed from time to time by the Governor-in-Council, but never at

grand features—he intended, in the first place, to reserve the land for settlers, to sell it to settlers only at low rates, and to give money only to promote the building of colonization railways; he intended, in the second place, to construct a number of short line colonization railways, radiating from Winnipeg; and he intended in the third place, to use all the power of the Government to keep the people together and form a solid state in and about the present Province of Manitoba, from which afterwards, as a base, railways might radiate on every side. Sir Richard said that he had since discussed this policy with men of great ability and experience in the North-West Territories, and of all political persuasions, and they had agreed that it was one of the greatest misfortunes that had ever befallen the North-West that it was not carried out. He argued that if this policy had been adopted, in all probability we should have had 500,000 families, or 2,000,000 of people settled in Manitoba, Alberta, Assiniboia, and Saskatchewan, and a volume of trade not far from \$1,000,000,000. Canada, if Mr. Mackenzie had remained in power to carry out the policy he had devised for the development of the North-West, would have been something like one thousand million dollars richer, and the people would have numbered 2,000,000 more than they did.

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less than \$1 an acre, and the proceeds devoted exclusively to the construction of the railway. In moving this resolution, Sir Charles Tupper entered into an elaborate examination of the plans of the Government, the position of the project, and the probable expenditure necessary to carry it to completion. He explained that 127 miles of road had been put under contract in British Columbia, as also the first one hundred miles west of Winnipeg. The cost of construction up to December 31st, 1879, was \$14,000,000, and he estimated that the whole road could be built for \$84,000,000, and that in view of the estimated sales of lands the work could be carried through without increasing the burdens of the people. He argued that both of the political parties were fully pledged to the construction of the railway, and claimed that while the Conservative Government in 1871 had only pledged itself to build the road in ten years, provided it did not cause an increase in taxation, the Liberal Government had gone even further, and had pledged the country by the Carnarvon terms to complete the road by 1890, and to spend \$2,000,000 a year in British Columbia, without regard to whether or not the burden of taxation was increased.

The amended policy was adopted by Parliament, and work proceeded under the plan of Government construction. There is no doubt that the policy of public construction was adopted by the Mackenzie Government with some hesitation, and not

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without fear as to the final results; and that if satisfactory terms could have been arranged, Mr. Mackenzie would have preferred construction by private capitalists. The original decision of the Conservative Government was also for private as against public construction. The Liberals, however, were forced to reverse this policy; and in his speech of 1880, Sir Charles Tupper declared that he too had undergone a change of opinion, and could now heartily accept the policy of construction by the Government. When the proposal was first made by the Liberal Administration in 1874, he had considered that the responsibility was too great; but now he thought popular feeling was so strongly in favour of settling the North-West, and the certainty of the large immigration and consequent sales of land was so great that he did not feel that there was any danger in proceeding with the work.¹ This seems to have been the view of Sir John Macdonald, at least at the inception of the undertaking. The Baroness Macdonald, in a contribution to an English periodical in 1897, intimated that the Conservative leader much preferred Government construction, and reluctantly surrendered to the prejudices of his colleagues in favour of construction by a private company.²

¹ Hansard, April 15th, 1880.

² "During Sir John's absence in Washington, the Government had pledged itself to build the road through the agency of an incorporated company supplemented by Government aid. I think Sir John regretted

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Mr. Alexander, on March 21st, 1876, submitted a resolution to the Senate affirming that the policy of building and operating railways as public works of the Dominion instead of aiding private chartered companies with bonuses of land and money, was fraught with disastrous consequences to the welfare of Canada, and must inevitably subject the public treasury to large annual advances to make good deficiencies in the amounts required to maintain such railways in working order, and thereby tend seriously to impair the public credit.¹ Mr. Miller, speaking to the motion, declared he was not prepared to say that in a new country like Canada, occasions did not arise when it was the imperative duty of the Government to construct and own important public works such as railways.² Sir David Macpherson also said that he would not be one to commit the House to the view that the country should not construct railways as public works. He believed, indeed, that it was the only way in which a great portion of the Pacific Railway could be constructed. Government operation he regarded as much more objectionable.³

this and would fain have had the railway constructed as a Government work; but his boldness was not to be communicated, and those in charge of the ship in his absence had judged the concession best, so as not to endanger the union with British Columbia."—Baroness Macdonald, in the *Pall Mall Magazine* for October, 1897.

¹ Senate Debates, 1876, page 170.

² Senate Debates, 1876, page 173.

³ Senate Debates, 1876, page 175.

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In 1873 Senator Macpherson had advocated construction by the Public Works' Department, or by a Board of Commissioners.

But the policy which Mr. Mackenzie adopted through stress of circumstances, and which his Conservative successors strove to continue, was abandoned in 1881 for the original plan of construction and operation by a private company. Many causes contributed to this decision. The difficulties of building through a comparatively unknown and wholly unsettled country were enormous. The cost of many sections of the work could not be satisfactorily determined. Both Governments were assailed with charges of fraud in the letting and management of contracts. The ultimate cost under public construction threatened to exceed all estimates. The failure to effect a partnership with Great Britain for the building of the road and the settlement of the West voided the chief expectation upon which the Conservative Ministers depended to continue Mackenzie's policy. Under all the circumstances, therefore, it was resolved to reverse the policy and renew the attempt to interest private capitalists in the undertaking.¹ In June, 1881, the

¹ "Our deliverance from Government contracts and their pestilent influence is almost as great a cause for rejoicing as our deliverance from the mad undertaking itself. We may say so without casting an aspersion on any particular Government. No Government, however honest, can control the powers of mischief which are called into activity by contracting on a large scale. The army and navy contracts in England, at the time of the war with France, were sources of jobbing and corruption as prolific as the contracts of the same description in

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country received the first intimation that the plan of public construction was to be abandoned. In a speech at Bath, Sir John Macdonald announced that private capitalists were then at Ottawa negotiating for the building of the railway. A few weeks later the Prime Minister, Sir Charles Tupper, and the Hon. J. H. Pope, in pursuance of these negotiations, sailed for England; and in September it was announced that a contract, subject to the ratification of Parliament, had been made with capitalists of London, Paris, and America, for the construction and maintenance of the railway. Thus the policy of public construction was finally abandoned, and thus was made the gravest national mistake in all our history.

The contract with the syndicate, of which Mr. George Stephen, Mr. Duncan J. McIntyre, and Mr. R. B. Angus were the original Canadian directors, the United States, or railway contracts here. Look at Mr. Sandford Fleming's letter declining the Chief Engineership of the Intercolonial. He says he would have to investigate unsettled claims amounting to several millions. What an opening for corruption is here! When the scene of operations is distant, and not under the eye of the Government, the danger cannot fail to be increased. The very names of some of the men who are active in connection with the North-West are enough to prove that corruption is abroad. There must be a carcass, and a pretty putrid one, where such birds are gathered together. Even to us materials for creating a sensation on the subject of contracts have come; but there is no use in creating a sensation; what we want is to see the source of the evil extinguished. Of the dangers which threaten free institutions on this continent there is hardly one greater than the corruption which waits on public works."—*The Bystander*, August, 1880.

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provided that they should receive \$25,000,000 in cash, and 25,000,000 acres of land. The grant of land was to be made in alternate sections of 640 acres each, extending back twenty-four miles deep on each side of the railway. In case any such sections were found unfit for settlement, the company was to be empowered to make other selections in the fertile belt necessary to complete the 25,000,000 acres. The Government was to grant to the company lands required for road-bed, station-grounds, work-shops, dock-ground, and water frontage at the termini on navigable waters, and all materials of construction were to be admitted free of duty. The company were to have the right to construct branch roads from any point on the main line of railway on filing a map and plan of such branch in the Department of Railways. For twenty years from the date of the contract no competing road south of the main line of the railway was to be authorized by Parliament, and in the establishment of new provinces provision was to be made for continuing this prohibition until the expiration of the twenty-year period. All station-grounds, work-shops, buildings, yards and other property, and all rolling stock and appurtenances required for the construction and operation of the railroad, and the capital stock of the company, were to be free forever from taxation by the Dominion or by any province thereafter to be established, or by any municipal corporation therein; and the lands of the company

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in the Territories, until either sold or occupied, should also be free of such taxation for twenty years after the grant from the Crown. The tolls of the railway were not to be reduced until the net profits exceeded 10 per cent. on the capital actually expended in its construction. The company were to pay the cost of building the portion of railway running 100 miles from Winnipeg westward; while the portion of the western section under contract from Kamloops to Yale was to be completed by June 30th, 1885, and the remaining portion of the western section between Yale and Port Moody by May 1st, 1891. These, with the Lake Superior section, on completion were to become the absolute property of the company.

According to the estimate of Sir Charles Tupper, the subventions granted to the company equalled at least \$78,000,000. This estimate covered 25,000,000 acres of land at \$1 an acre, \$25,000,000 in cash, and \$28,000,000 worth of completed railway. If we calculate original cost, interest, and cost of surveys, the portions of the road constructed by Government should be placed at \$30,000,000 or \$35,000,000, rather than at the figure quoted by Sir Charles Tupper. There were, besides, the huge exemptions, the monopoly provisions, and the absolute control of an empire of the best lands of the West. The bargain was fiercely attacked by the Liberal press and the Liberal politicians, and as energetically defended by the Government. The strenuous and masterful

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defence of the contract by Sir Charles Tupper was a noteworthy feature of the controversy, and divided public attention with the Hon. Edward Blake's magnificent attack on the agreement. Mr. Blake held that according to Sir Charles Tupper's estimate of the total cost of the enterprise, the company would have to provide only \$21,000,000, and for this they would receive 25,000,000 acres of land. He objected to the exemption of the lands from taxation for twenty years, as calculated to retard settlement. He argued that the company would hold the lands until their value had been enhanced by actual settlers, who would have to bear an inordinate share of taxation in consequence of the non-settlement of the exempted sections. He opposed the monopoly clauses, and the practical prohibition of public control over freight charges; and very ably advocated the Sault Ste. Marie route as affording the best and cheapest and most direct all-rail connection with Western Canada.

The Liberal leader, for such Mr. Blake had now become, was loyally and powerfully supported by Mr. Laurier. In his first speech in the House of Commons Mr. Laurier had said that the leaders of the Liberal party were as anxious as their opponents to have a railway constructed between older Canada and the Pacific, but that commercial, rather than political reasons, should determine the route, the amount of expenditure, and the method of construction. He said now that they should build

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the road as the resources of the country would permit. But as the Government had determined to proceed with immediate construction, there was much to commend the idea of construction by a company rather than by the Government, and particularly owing to the great uncertainty, not merely as to the cost of building, but also as to the cost of future operation. He objected, however, to the partnership between the syndicate and the Administration. The country expected that by this contract the Government would be relieved from the work of construction. Instead, the company would build two sections of the road, and the Government two sections, and these the most difficult; and on completion the whole would belong to the company. The company could likewise import as freely as the Government, and like the Government were exempt from taxation. The Government would do the work of the company, and the company would have all the privileges of the Government. He condemned the provision against reduction of rates until the company's earnings reached 10 per cent. on the amount invested in construction, and the exemptions from taxation and other privileges which would give the company an almost absolute monopoly over the western country. They would be the landlords of the North-West, and could hold their lands out of use, fix their own tolls, and obtain extortionate profits out of the settlers. It was a question if the road had been gradually constructed, as the

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necessities of the country required, if the Government of Canada would not have done well to proclaim that the needy and poor of all the world could find free land throughout the whole of the North-West, and under these favourable circumstances obtain the best market prices for their products. We should then have had, perhaps, fewer millionaires, but vastly more happy and contented homes.

Bye and bye, Mr. Laurier pointed out, municipal government would be organized in the West, roads opened, and other facilities of civilization provided. The company, however, could not be taxed for these necessities, while their exemptions and privileges must be a constant source of litigation and bitterness in the country. It was the universal experience that where men were not checked by positive laws and regulations, they would abuse their position to the detriment of their fellows. Every province of the Dominion had had its land company. There had been one in Ontario, one in New Brunswick, one in Quebec, and one in Prince Edward Island; and everywhere they had been a curse and a bane. Everywhere they had blocked settlement and pressed heavily upon the energies of the people. He found fault also with the condition in the contract which necessitated immediate construction of the road along the north shore of Lake Superior, while he agreed that the road should be built on Canadian soil. If, however, in the mean-

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time the road to Sault Ste. Marie were constructed, we should have in two or three years at the utmost the benefit of the trade of North-Western Canada and of the north-western States of the Union. Finally, he declared that the contract with the syndicate was a public danger, inasmuch as it threatened to create upon the free soil of Canada a monopoly which might yet become a cause of trouble to the peace and harmony of the country; while if it was to be judged in the light of modern British ideas and principles, it carried its death warrant, and the duty of Parliament was to reject it on the first opportunity.¹

The debate in Parliament was prolonged, and formidable protests were organized by the Liberals in various constituencies. Petitions signed by thirty thousand persons were presented against the ratification of the contract. A rival syndicate was formed, headed by Sir William Howland, which offered to accept twenty-two millions of money and twenty-two million acres of land; to forego exemptions from Dominion and local taxation on lands, and from duties on materials imported for use in construction; to build the Sault line for a bonus of \$12,000 a mile; to allow the Government to postpone construction of the eastern section, of the western section from Kamloops to Port Moody, and of the mountain division of the central section; and to permit the country to assume possession of

¹ Hansard, December 21st, 1880.

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the road, and of all the property and assets of the company, at a price to be fixed by arbitration. This offer was submitted to Parliament by Mr. Blake as an amendment to the original contract, but of course was rejected by the solid vote of the ministerial party, as were many other amendments and propositions offered by Liberal members during the session. At length the contract was ratified without any substantial alteration in the original provisions, and the company proceeded with extraordinary energy to the accomplishment of their great undertaking.

The contract called for the completion of the railway by May 1st, 1891. It was actually completed on November 7th, 1885. The North Shore Railway, connecting Montreal with Quebec, was acquired by the company in 1882. Between 1881 and 1884 branch lines totalling 471 miles were added to the system in Manitoba, and from time to time various leased lines were acquired in the older provinces. The capital stock of the company had been fixed at \$100,000,000, and it was expected that any additional amount required to complete the road could easily be raised from land sales or upon the security of the land grant. But the lands were not readily sold in competition with Government homesteads; and although land-grant bonds were received at \$1.10 for the company's lands, they could not be freely negotiated. In 1883, the company purchased from the Govern-

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ment a guarantee of 3 per cent. per annum for ten years for the \$65,000,000 of stock then sold, and made similar provision for the \$35,000,000 still unsold. The cost of this terminable annuity was \$16,000,000, calculated at 4 per cent., to meet semi-annual payments of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Of this amount \$8,710,240 was paid in cash, and security given for the early payment of the balance.

Still the stock could not be sold at a satisfactory figure, and further public support became necessary. In 1884, the Government induced Parliament to loan the company \$22,500,000. This, added to the balance due upon the annuity purchase, created a total debt to the country of \$29,880,000, and to secure this amount the Government took a lien upon the entire property of the company. In consideration of this loan the syndicate undertook to complete the road by May 1st, 1886, and construction proceeded at the rate of five hundred miles yearly. This necessitated an enormous annual outlay, and as a natural consequence the loan was soon exhausted, while the first lien of the Government on all the company's property prevented sale of their stock. They found it necessary, therefore, to make a further appeal to the Government. Accordingly, in 1885 the \$35,000,000 of unsold stock in the hands of the Government was cancelled, and an equal amount of 5 per cent. first mortgage bonds was issued. The \$29,880,000 of indebtedness to the country was made payable on May 1st, 1891,

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with 4 per cent. interest. The Government accepted \$20,000,000 of the first mortgage bonds as security for that amount of the debt, and the security of all the unsold lands of the company for the balance of \$9,880,000. Of the \$15,000,000 bonds remaining, the company deposited with the Government \$8,000,000 as security for a temporary loan of \$5,000,000. The remainder they negotiated, and within a few months paid back the temporary loan, and thus released \$8,000,000 of bonds. In March, 1886, the company returned all the cash advanced under the \$20,000,000 bonds, and surrendered 6,793,014 acres of land at \$1.50 per acre for the balance. The Government at this time also surrendered \$5,000,000 of land-grant bonds held as security for the continuous operation of the railway as provided in the original contract.

In 1888, still another transaction between the company and the Government became necessary. In order to release the West from the provision against the construction of competing roads west of Lake Superior, the country guaranteed the interest for fifty years on an issue of \$15,000,000 of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. bonds secured upon the 15,000,000 acres of unsold lands belonging to the company. This final rearrangement of the financial terms was forced by the determined struggle of Manitoba to secure the entrance into that province of the Northern Pacific, and to wrest absolute railway freedom from the federal authority. Sixty-five millions

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of stock were issued during the progress of construction. This realized only \$31,000,000, and of this amount \$21,000,000 were used to pay and secure dividends. The ordinary stock was issued in three series. The first issue was for \$5,000,000 at par to the original shareholders. The next was for \$20,000,000. This was issued at 25 cents on the dollar, and thus realized only \$5,000,000 of genuine capital. The third of \$40,000,000, issued at 52½ cents, realized \$21,000,000 in cash. The actual cash which the stock represents may be thus recapitulated :

	Stock.	Equal to Cash.
First issue	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Second issue	20,000,000	5,000,000
Third issue.....	40,000,000	21,000,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total.....	\$65,000,000	\$31,000,000

Speaking in Parliament in 1885, Mr. Blake pointed out that the Government had built and handed over to the company 641 miles of completed railway, besides the Pembina branch, at an estimated cost of \$30,000,000. The Government surveys had cost \$3,440,000. The Government subsidy was \$25,000,000 in cash. There was realized from land-grant bonds, from town sites, and from other minor sources of income, \$11,000,000. This made \$69,500,000, besides which there remained 20,000,000 acres of land. Estimating the land at \$1 per acre, the company received in public aids—not loans, but gifts—\$89,500,000. If the land was valued at \$2, \$109,500,000 were obtained. The

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loans of 1884 amounted to \$29,810,000. Then there were gifts as before, \$69,500,000; loans, \$29,810,000, or cash aids of \$99,310,000. Adding the 20,000,000 acres of land at \$2, a total of gifts and loans of \$139,310,000 was obtained. The cost of the whole line, according to the company's own estimate, was \$83,500,000; the equipment, \$8,000,000; the total, \$91,500,000. The road was to be the property of the company. Both the company and the Government declared that it would pay from the day it was opened. Canada had provided the means, and far more than the means, to build the road; the First Minister said that it would carry freights at one-fourth the cost of other roads; a road that could do that would certainly be a highly paying concern. Mr. Blake also pointed out that the \$5,000,000 to be given the company by the resolutions under discussion would increase the public aid to the project to \$144,810,000, estimating the land at \$2 per acre; and that \$13,827,000 more would have to be spent in aiding the construction of the railway through Maine to the Atlantic seaboard, and other roads connected with the transcontinental railway project.

Dealing with the financial methods of the company, Mr. Blake pointed out that by the system of finance adopted, they had raised on stock \$24,500,000, and had devoted to dividends \$21,000,000. This gave \$3,500,000 to go on with the work, and \$21,000,000 to go into their own pockets. What,

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he asked, was the amount they had actually paid in dividends up to February, 1885? On the first \$5,000,000 they had paid \$1,000,000; on the \$20,000,000, which represented \$5,000,000 cash, they had paid \$2,610,000; on the \$30,000,000, representing \$15,281,000, they had paid \$2,640,000; and on the balance, \$10,000,000, representing \$4,212,000, they had paid \$750,000, or a total of \$7,000,000 already paid in cash to shareholders by this embarrassed company, which had to come to Parliament for help in their urgent need. And having paid \$7,000,000 in cash, they had then deposited with the Government, at 4 per cent. interest, \$14,100,000 to secure future dividends. The original proprietors, who took the additional \$20,000,000 of stock, had received, on their \$5,000,000 of cash, for part of the time 24 per cent. per annum on their investment, and for the rest 20 per cent. They had received \$3,610,000 in dividends already, and were to get in eight years and a half \$6,875,000 more, or \$10,485,000 in dividends, apart altogether from the road, the land, and the earnings of the road on \$10,000,000 of capital. If the calculation were made to include the September, 1885, and February, 1886, extra dividends, there would have been paid and provided for dividends \$24,875,000, or a sum equal to the whole amount realized from the sale of the company's stock. The shareholders would have paid \$24,500,000 for their stock, and there would have been paid and provided for dividends

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an equal amount. The net result of the transaction had been to invest money with one hand for the purpose of taking it out with the other. In substance, the proceeds of the stock had been divided among the stockholders. The Government had to raise the money to build the road, and the country would have to pay the tolls for all time in order to pay dividends upon the stock so divided. All this was to be done because the stockholders in this enterprise had realized from \$60,000,000 of stock \$24,500,000, and had chosen to appropriate \$24,500,000 to pay dividends upon their stock.¹ It may here be added that in 1885 the stock of the company which now sells at 135 sold as low as 35 $\frac{3}{4}$.

The various rearrangements of the terms between the Government and the syndicate were vigorously and determinedly opposed by the Liberal party under Mr. Blake's leadership, and in many of the debates Mr. Laurier intervened with thoughtful and eloquent speeches. But with the country committed to the construction of the railway by the syndicate, the Government was almost bound to carry the enterprise to a successful issue. Ministers, however, could have used the various crises in the affairs of the company to force a modification of the more obnoxious terms of the original bargain, to break up their land monopoly, restrict their exemptions, and regain the free right of control over freight and passenger charges. It has to be re-

¹ Hansard, June 17th, 1885, pages 2,612, 2,619.

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membered, however, that the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway was a formidable undertaking, and that only capitalists of extraordinary courage and of extraordinary resource would have dared to embark in the enterprise. From Vancouver to Fort William the road ran through nearly two thousand miles of territory with a scanty and scattered population. There were few important business centres, and a limited local traffic. There were five or six hundred miles of barren and unsettled country along the north shore of Lake Superior. For through traffic there was the keen competition of the American railways, and of the Grand Trunk, with its American connections. Construction on the Lake Superior and mountain sections was enormously costly, and the cost of operation very heavy. There were powerful reasons why the road should be extended through older Canada, its American connections established, and its trans-Pacific steamship service inaugurated. It could not exist upon its local traffic, and these extensions and developments were necessary to its success, even to its existence as a commercial enterprise. In fact, the operation of this great railway for the first ten years of its history was a much greater achievement than its construction. It was possible to induce Parliament to build the road with public money. It was not possible to induce the country to operate the road at the public expense for the benefit of a private corporation.

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The sanguine expectations of rapid settlement of the West fell lamentably short of realization. The early eighties witnessed a tremendous boom in Manitoba; but the era of inflation was brief and frenzied, and the results disastrous and enduring. Millions of acres of land were granted to colonization companies. There was an immense waste of the public resources upon eager speculators and greedy partisans. There was a season of delirious gambling in prairie lots, a frantic competition in the plotting of paper towns, a reckless trading on the future that occasioned widespread loss and ruin, and put a positive blight upon the country for years afterward. We wasted our patrimony in the West as a spendthrift wastes a fortune, and created some grave problems for other generations. As the Hon. Clifford Sifton told Parliament a few years ago: "We have 67,000,000 acres of land in Manitoba and the North-West Territories reserved from settlement. On that 67,000,000 of acres, I, as the Minister of the Interior to-day, cannot give a man a homestead entry. Nor can I sell a single acre of it, although there are millions of acres of that land that never have been and never will be nor can be earned by any railway company. But they are reserved by order in Council, the good faith of the Dominion is pledged to that forever, and no Government can interfere with that reserve until the bond is literally fulfilled to the last letter."¹

¹ Hansard, February 16th, 1898.

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When the charter was granted to the syndicate, it was popularly understood that the exemption from taxation was to run for only twenty years, but it is now held that the exemption obtains until the patent is issued to the settler upon railway lands. The clause in the charter reads: "The lands of the company in the North-West Territories, until they are either sold or occupied, shall also be free from such taxation for twenty years after the grant thereof from the Crown." If the latter interpretation holds good, the clause has the same effect as if it had simply declared the land free from taxation until sold or occupied. Hence, the land question may yet become as crucial and as menacing to the peace of the West as Mr. Laurier predicted. Since 1896, however, the taxable area of the West has been materially increased. Over 10,000,000 acres of railway lands have been patented, and except where positive exemptions exist, the municipalities have been encouraged to assert the right of taxation over unoccupied areas. The Dominion Government has also offered to aid any western municipality in carrying a case through the courts to determine when the Canadian Pacific reserves become subject to taxation, while properly refusing to ask Parliament to give an arbitrary interpretation to this clause of the railway contract.

There is an excellent prospect that the right of public regulation of charges over the whole Canadian Pacific system will soon be regained. In

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1897, Parliament granted to the company aid to the extent of \$11,000 per mile, or not exceeding in the whole, \$3,630,000, towards the construction of a railway from Lethbridge, in the district of Alberta, through the Crow's Nest Pass to Nelson, in British Columbia. The agreement provided for a reduction of rates on many staple articles of consumption in the West, and reduced the tolls on grain and flour three cents per hundred pounds, half of the reduction to be made in 1898, and half in 1899. It gave running powers over the new road, and all its branches and connections, to competing railways; and subjected to public regulation freight rates on all shipments originating on the Crow's Nest Pass road, or destined for points on the road and its branches. Then, in the session of Parliament just closed, the company were authorized to increase their capital stock from \$65,000,000 to \$85,000,000. It was stipulated that this stock should be issued at par, and should not affect the clause in the original contract providing for conditional immunity from public control. It is understood that \$9,000,000 will be used for locomotives, cars, and other equipment; \$2,000,000 for the enlargement and construction of repair shops at Montreal and other points on the system; \$6,000,000 for the reduction of grades, improvements of alignment, and double-tracking; and \$3,000,000 for additional grain elevators, terminals, sidings and other necessary facilities to meet the increasing business of the country. The

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company also agreed to a reference to the Supreme Court, or if necessary to the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council, in order to determine the exact bearing of the section in the original contract which prohibits reduction of their charges until their earnings reach 10 per cent. on the amount expended in construction; or in other words, to determine the amount actually and legitimately expended in the construction of the railway.

The Western land policy of the Government and the bargain with the Canadian Pacific syndicate were outstanding issues in the election campaign of 1882, and on both counts Mr. Blake laid formidable indictments against the Administration.¹ He, however, found it difficult to interest older Canada in the technical details of the land regulations, while the bulk of financial and commercial opinion was undoubtedly favourable to the railway contract. The extraordinary features of the bargain were recognized, but they were thought to be measurably offset by the magnitude of the undertaking. The commercial community were eager to have the road constructed, and there was a considerable degree of public faith in the ability of Mr.

¹ "I challenge the North-West land policy of the Government, which has in various forms given facilities for speculation, whereby great areas of the choicest lands are falling into the hands of middlemen, who will hold them until they exact from the immigrant large profits, thus at once retarding the development of the country and lessening the prosperity of the settler. Our motto is: 'The land for the settler, the price for the public.'" —Hon. Edward Blake's address to the electors of West Durham, May 23rd, 1882.

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Stephen and his associates to carry through the undertaking. Mr. Mackenzie's plan of utilizing the water stretches as essential parts of the system of through communication with the West seemed to suggest timid counsels and patchwork methods, and had only the hesitating support of many Liberals; while the plan of rapid all-rail connection, provided in the bargain with the syndicate, was thorough and heroic to the last degree. The West was as indifferent as the East to the certain evils of land monopoly and freight monopoly, which were inherent in the contract. In fact, the long and resolute opposition which the Liberal party offered to many features of the bargain brought down upon the Liberal leaders the enduring displeasure of the Western communities, and now when twenty years have passed there is the very irony of fate in the attacks which are made upon the Liberal party for the existence of the evils which they strove so hard to minimize and avert.¹

¹ Morgan's *Annual Register* for 1879 and 1880 deals in considerable detail with the various proposals for construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The financial features of the enterprise are presented in an address delivered by Mr. Thomas C. Keefer, President of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and reprinted in the *Statistical Year-Book of Canada* for 1894. Mr. Alexander Begg's "History of the North-West" enters exhaustively into the whole story of the great undertaking.

CHAPTER XV

THE BATTLE FOR PROVINCIAL RIGHTS

PUBLIC opinion in Ontario was much more deeply excited during the campaign of 1882 by the startling redistribution of constituencies which the Government forced through Parliament on the eve of dissolution. In order to increase the representation of Ontario from eighty-eight to ninety-two members, the whole political map of the province was altered almost beyond recognition. Respect for county boundaries which had obtained in former readjustments of population, and which principle represented the declared policy of Sir John Macdonald, was ruthlessly disregarded.¹ Townships were boldly torn from their natural municipal and historical relationships, thrown, regardless of their proper geographical connections, into new electoral divisions, and the constituencies fashioned to the direct aggrandizement

¹ When Sir John Macdonald brought in his bill for the readjustment of the constituencies in 1872, he said : "The desire of the Government has been to preserve the representations for counties and sub-divisions of counties as much as possible. . . . It is desired as much as possible to keep the representation within the county, so that each county that is a municipality of Ontario shall be represented, and if it becomes large enough, divide it into two ridings. . . . It is, I think, a grand system that the people of Canada should have the opportunity of choosing for political promotion the men in whom they

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of the Conservative party with an audacity unprecedented in Canadian politics. Great bunches of Liberal voters were hived in particular districts, the natural voting strength of the Liberal party was materially weakened, and the Liberal leaders, with rare exceptions, were forced to face hostile majorities in their old electoral divisions, or rather in the new constituencies constructed upon the partisan specifications of their political opponents. In one of his speeches during the campaign, Sir John Macdonald said: "The Grits complain that they are hived all together. It seems they do not like the association. I told my constituents the other day—well, I hope, indeed I know they will be my constituents—a story. When the Reform Club was built in London it was the finest club-house there, and the club-room was really a magnificent chamber. Theodore Hook, who was a great wit, and the editor of a Tory paper, was taken into the Reform Club by a friend who desired to show him the place. When he was in the club-room, the friend

have the most confidence and of whose abilities they are fully assured. All that great advantage is lost by cutting off a portion of two separate counties and adding them together for electoral purposes only. Those portions so cut off have no common interest. They do not meet together, and they have no common feeling, except that once in five years they go to the polls in their own township to vote for a man who may be known in the one section and not in the other. This tends towards the introduction of the American system of caucuses, by which wire-pullers take adventurers for their political ability only, and not for any personal respect for them. . . . When the representation is increased it should be by sub-dividing the counties into ridings."

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said: 'Well, how do you like our room?' Said Hook: 'I would rather have your room than your company.' So it is with the Grits. They do not like each other's company. They like to associate with Conservative gentlemen such as you. Your being with them rather gives tone to their society."¹

The readjustment struck directly at the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Richard Cartwright, the Hon. David Mills, Mr. William Paterson, Mr. George W. Ross, Mr. M. C. Cameron, and other of the more active spirits of the Liberal party. But it is satisfactory to remember that at least for the moment the conspiracy was much less successful than its authors expected. In later years, however, when public indignation over the measure had subsided, the vicious readjustment of 1882 proved a serious handicap to the Liberal party in Ontario.² With the exception of the Dominion Franchise Act of 1885, no other measure of equal partisan enormity has been introduced into the Parliament of Canada. Mr. Laurier loyally supported his colleagues from the sister province in their energetic protest against this audacious measure, and when he was returned to power, sought by a fair and equitable measure of redistribution to restore equal political rights to the Liberals of Ontario. He was blocked

¹ Speech at the Amphitheatre, Toronto, May 30th, 1882.

² Mackenzie, Mills, Paterson, Ross, and Cameron were all elected in 1882 in the gerrymandered ridings. Cartwright, whose old constituency of Centre Huron was abolished, ran in Centre Wellington, and was defeated.

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by the Senate, which accepted the Act of 1882 with amiable docility. Indeed since the very organization of the commonwealth the Senate has proceeded on the principle that to question the expediency and justice of Conservative legislation is flagrant treason to British institutions in North America. But the day of redress and restitution cannot be much longer postponed, even by a Senate whose chief function is to prevent the hasty repeal of bad enactments, and all Canadians will hope that the next readjustment of the constituencies will be as conspicuous for justice and fair dealing as that of 1882 was remarkable for contempt of sound public opinion and bold disregard of the rights of the political minority.¹

The dispute, long, tortuous, and acrimonious, over the boundaries of Ontario, was likewise an active factor in the elections of 1882. According to the award made in 1878 by Chief-Justice Harrison, Sir Edward Thornton, and Sir Francis Hincks, the territory of Ontario extended north to Albany River, west to the Lake of the Woods, and southwards to the Minnesota boundary. Mr. Mackenzie passed out of office before this decision could be ratified by the federal Parliament, and direct parliamentary ratification was refused by Sir John Mac-

¹The redistribution bill presented to Parliament by the Liberal Government in 1899 strictly observed county boundaries, and provided that in such counties as were entitled to two or three representatives, the boundaries of the various ridings should be delimited by Superior Court judges.

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donald.¹ For years the question remained a bone of contention between the Liberal party and the Conservative party, and between Ontario as represented by Sir Oliver Mowat, and the Dominion as represented by the Conservative leader. Various propositions were made by the federal Ministers for a further arbitration, or an appeal to the courts under various conditions and limitations. All were resisted and rejected by the provincial Ministers. As a last resort, in 1881, Sir John Macdonald introduced and put through Parliament an Act extending the boundaries of Manitoba, and declaring that the eastern boundary of that province should be "a line drawn due north from where the westerly boundary of the Province of Ontario intersects the international boundary line dividing Canada from the United States of America." This Act, of deliberate design, did not undertake to define the easterly boundary of Manitoba. The purpose was to embroil Manitoba in the dispute, and to force a conflict of jurisdiction between the two provinces. As a result, something like an incipient rebellion arose out of the rival attempts of the officers of Ontario and Manitoba to exercise authority in the disputed territory.

¹ "I never dreamed for a moment—whether I had succeeded again in controlling the legislation of the country or not,—I did not believe that any Government would have dared to avoid giving effect to any arbitration solemnly entered into between the two Governments."—Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, in the House of Commons, March 31st, 1882.

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The Dominion Government also undertook to deal with timber limits and mineral rights in the district. Sir John Macdonald laid claim to the land, timber, and minerals, in virtue of the extinguishment of the Indian title by the Dominion, and parcelled out great tracts of the territory under federal licenses. In one of his speeches the Conservative leader said: "The disputed territory was either in Manitoba or in Ontario. Manitoba was now being settled by the sons of Ontario citizens, and it was of no consequence whether that territory belonged to Ontario or to her sons. As a lawyer—and he had never given a constitutional opinion that was not sustained by the highest tribunals in the Empire—as a lawyer, he told them that the award had no validity whatever, and was simply a piece of waste paper and would not decide the question." He added that if all the territory which Mr. Mowat claimed were awarded to Ontario, there was not one stick of timber, one acre of land, or one lump of lead, iron or gold, that did not belong to the Dominion, or to people who had purchased from the Dominion Government.¹

The dispute had not reached the last critical stages during the election of 1882, but the controversy was keen and bitter, and partook somewhat of the nature of a personal struggle between Mr. Mowat and Sir John Macdonald. The provincial Ministers stood firmly upon the award of 1878, and

¹ Speech at the Amphitheatre, Toronto, May 30th, 1882.

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they received the faithful and energetic support of the Liberal leaders in the House of Commons. Mr. Laurier, speaking on a resolution by Mr. J. B. Plumb, of Niagara, proposing to refer the question to the Supreme Court of Canada or to the Imperial Privy Council for a final decision, and pending the reference to vest the administration of the lands in a joint commission to be appointed by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario,¹ took the simple and natural position that an award of arbitrators is binding on both parties, and cannot be questioned except for cause. The arbitrators were appointed under sufficient parliamentary authority, the decision reached was of the nature of a legal judgment rather than a compromise, and the award should be received by both parties and carried out in its entirety. He said: "If you deny Ontario the boundary she claims, she may deny Quebec her northern boundary, and those sectional cries, which at one time were thought to be forever destroyed, would be renewed. The question having been settled ought to remain settled. There is no occasion to open it anew. I do not fear the appeal that will be made against me in my own province on the vote I intend giving. I have no hesitation in saying this award is binding on both parties, and ought to be carried out in good faith. The consideration that the great Province of Ontario will be made greater I altogether lay aside as unfair,

¹ Hansard, March 31st, 1882, page 665.

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unfriendly, and unjust.”¹ Dealing with this speech, the *Toronto Globe* said: “To the credit of Mr. Laurier it must be said that he had the courage of his convictions, and rose superior to prejudices and fears. He both spoke and voted against the Government’s fatuous proposal, and by so doing invited a comparison between himself and the Ontario supporters of the Government by no means flattering to the latter.”²

Two years before this speech was made, Mr. Laurier had voted against the appointment of a committee to investigate the award, and in consequence was violently attacked by his political opponents in Quebec. This speech led to a renewal of the attack, if indeed it had ever been quite abandoned; and it was vehemently represented that he was prepared to sacrifice the interests of his own province for the sake of Ontario. On the other hand, the incurable suspicion that Quebec is eternally plotting to impair the political power of Ontario found frequent and violent expression during the contest. It was argued that as Quebec had opposed representation by population in order to hold an equal share of power in the old Parliament of United Canada, and had opposed Confederation as calculated to diminish her authority and imperil French Canadian institutions, so she now sought to prevent ratification of the Ontario boundary award,

¹ Hansard, April 4th, 1882.

² Editorial in the *Toronto Globe*, April 6th, 1882.

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to reduce the proper area of the English province, and to deprive her of opportunity for future expansion and increase of representation in the federal Parliament. It may be that provocation came from the *Bleus* of Quebec, and even many French Liberals voted against the ratification of the award. But Liberals in Ontario seemed not unwilling to renew the old racial quarrel, and as a result inter-provincial relations were greatly embittered by the controversy, and the Conservative party derived material advantage from the situation.¹

In the Commons in 1882, Mr. Tasse, an influential Conservative journalist, and one of the Conservative members for Ottawa, challenged the attitude of the Liberal press and the Liberal party of Ontario, and entered into an elaborate argument to show that Quebec did not seek to dominate the Confederation, that the English minority of the province received ample justice at the hands of the French and Catholic majority, and that the only object of Liberals was to divert attention from

¹ Sir John Macdonald, finding himself compelled at length to make a declaration of his policy in the face of the pending election, throws off the mask, and his answer to the demands of Ontario for her rights is: "Not one stick of timber, one acre of land, one lump of lead, iron or gold." This is final and conclusive. This is the *Bleu* ultimatum. Ontario is to be robbed of territory, until she is reduced to half the size of Quebec, and her magnificent resources taken away from her, because our prosperity excites the malignant envy of the French *Bleus*, and our annual surpluses offer so striking a contrast to their empty treasury and heavy taxation.—Editorial in the *Toronto Globe*, June 2nd, 1882.

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legitimate public issues, and excite sectional jealousies against the Government. He described the French Liberals in Parliament as "the much mutilated band from Lower Canada," and declared his surprise that the Liberal party received any support at all in the Province of Quebec. He charged that in order to reach power the Liberal party were ready "to sow the seeds of civil war, to set province against province, creed against creed, Englishmen against Frenchmen, to shake the very foundations of our political system, to break up the union."¹

In the course of his reply, Mr. Laurier said that if the Liberal press of Ontario made appeals to the prejudices of the people, Mr. Tasse did right to denounce them, and he could only wish that the Conservative party in Quebec would profess the principles which Mr. Tasse professed in Parliament. He said: "The Liberal party of the Province of Quebec have no reason to feel ashamed of their position. If we are but few in this House to-day it is because we have been decimated in defence of a noble cause, because we have defended freedom and constitutional government against the attack of the party to which he belongs. . . . If we are decimated, is it not due to the fact that the press and the party to which he belongs have always traded on the prejudices of our people? The honourable gentleman and his party would not have a

¹ Hansard, April 25th, 1882.

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standing in this House were it not that for the last twenty-five years they never dared to meet us on political questions, but have always appealed to the prejudices of our countrymen. Who can deny the fact? The honourable gentleman objects to the remark I made somewhere, that if Baldwin and Lafontaine came back to this country they would not recognize the party to which they belonged as their party. Can the charge be denied? Is it not a fact that the press to which the honourable gentleman belongs has always represented it a heresy to belong to the Liberal party or to be called a Liberal? When we attack the Government, when we condemn their principles, when we try to engage them in a battle on political grounds in the Province of Quebec, we are always met with the same cry. These gentlemen are enemies of your religion, they are Liberals, and it is not possible for a Catholic to be a Liberal. How often have we not found these words in the press of the honourable gentleman? How often could I not find them, if I had time, in the very paper of which he is the editor? It is because of such cries that we are so few here to-day. But, as I said before, few as we are, I would rather stand here a defender of the rights obtained for us by our fathers than belong to the so-called Conservative party of the Province of Quebec.”¹

Finally, upon a joint case submitted by Ontario and Manitoba, the award of the arbitrators was

¹ Hansard, April 25th, 1882.

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upheld by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the constitutional position of the Liberals signally vindicated, and Ontario secured in the possession of territory vastly richer in timber, in minerals, and in cultivable soil, than even the most optimistic of her champions then believed. The long and determined resistance of Sir John Macdonald to ratification of the award, was, however, not wholly barren of result. He, at least, forced a reference to the Judicial Committee, and to that extent could claim a party triumph.

The attempt to establish federal jurisdiction over the retail liquor trade was also a legacy from the general election of 1882, and another incident in the long duel between Sir Oliver Mowat and Sir John Macdonald. During the campaign the Conservative leader threatened to wrest the licensing power from the Ontario Government, and at the next session of the Dominion Parliament an Act was passed taking power to create license districts; to appoint commissioners for such districts; to issue through such commissioners, hotel, saloon, shop, vessel and wholesale licenses; and generally to assume the control over the liquor trade hitherto exercised by the provincial authorities. It is perhaps not wide of the mark to say that the chief design of this law was to increase the patronage of federal Ministers, or rather to limit the patronage exercised by the Liberal Government of Ontario.¹ It was the pro-

¹ If he carried the country, as he would do, he would tell Mr.

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duct of intense political partisanship, and but served to throw the liquor business into confusion in every province of the Dominion. Looking at such questions from the standpoint of a convinced and logical federalist, Mr. Laurier never found it difficult to choose his position. He denounced the bill as a step towards legislative union, and still another development of Sir John Macdonald's sustained attempt to destroy the federal character of the Constitution, and reduce the local Legislatures to the position of costly ornaments.¹ But this Act was as short-lived as it was mischievous. Two years after its adoption, the Privy Council declared that it was not within the legislative authority of the Parliament of Canada, and the control of the liquor trade, properly and advantageously, reverted to the several provinces.

One other measure designed to increase the patronage of the Conservative party and aggrandize the federal authority at the expense of the Legislatures, dates back to this period of intense political rancour. It was intimated in the Speech from the Throne in 1885, that Parliament would be asked to consider a measure relating to the representation of the people, and for the assimilation of the electoral

Mowat, that little tyrant who had attempted to control public opinion by getting hold of every little office, from that of a Division Court bailiff to a tavern-keeper, that he would get a bill passed at Ottawa returning to the municipalities the power taken away from them by the License Act.—From a speech by Sir John Macdonald at Yorkville, June 1st, 1882.

¹ Hansard, March 18th, 1884.

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franchises of the several provinces. This was the last of many intimations that Sir John Macdonald had such a measure under consideration. Six times, in fact, the bill was introduced in Parliament. In 1870 it was carried through a second reading and then abandoned in committee in face of a motion by Mr. Dorion declaring for adhesion to the provincial franchises. As now presented, it was one of the most objectionable bills ever submitted to a free Parliament. It was proposed to establish a uniform franchise throughout the Dominion, to appoint federal officers for the preparation and revision of the lists, and to enfranchise the Indian population.¹ There was nothing in the bill to prevent the appointment of the most active Conservative partisans as revising officers, who were empowered to make as well as to revise the lists, and

¹ Mr. Mills.—What we are anxious to know is whether the honourable gentleman proposes to give other than enfranchised Indians votes.

Sir John Macdonald.—Yes.

Mr. Mills.—Indians residing on a reservation?

Sir John Macdonald.—Yes, if they have the necessary property qualification.

Mr. Mills.—An Indian who cannot make a contract for himself, who can neither buy nor sell without the consent of the Superintendent General, an Indian who is not enfranchised?

Sir John Macdonald.—Whether he is enfranchised or not.

Mr. Mills.—This will include Indians in Manitoba and British Columbia?

Sir John Macdonald.—Yes.

Mr. Mills.—Poundmaker and Big Bear?

Sir John Macdonald.—Yes.

Mr. Mills.—So that they can go from a scalping party to the polls.
—Hansard, April 30th, 1885.

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whose judgment as to the qualifications of voters was final and absolutely unappealable. The Liberal party resolved that the measure, as presented, should not go through Parliament. They resorted to a deliberate policy of obstruction, and adopted every device that the forms of Parliament would permit to block its progress. They divided into relays, and while one contingent slept the other kept the debate going. They forced as many as twenty-five divisions at one sitting. They read whole books to the Speaker, and spoke for hours, even for days, on the most insignificant details of the measure.

Mr. Laurier was not one of the more active of the obstructionists, but he was in thorough sympathy with the policy of his associates. He denounced the bill as bad in principle and vicious in intention. He moved, perhaps, the chief amendment submitted from the Liberal benches, declaring for the practice which had prevailed ever since Confederation of utilizing for federal elections the provincial franchise and voters' lists. He said the bill took the preparation of the lists out of the hands of the people, and turned the work over to the henchmen and parasites of the Government. The Constitution was based upon diversity, and we had neither uniformity of territory, of population, nor of institutions. We had seven different communities, and it was best that the right to determine the franchise should be left to each community. Prince Edward

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Island had manhood suffrage, Quebec did not desire manhood suffrage, and it was neither necessary nor expedient to enlarge the one franchise nor restrict the other in disregard of local sentiment. The bill was bad from every conceivable standpoint, and would destroy a system which had given great and uniform satisfaction. It was an attack on the federal principle, an invasion of popular rights, a step towards centralization, and opposed to the steady conviction of the country that the provincial franchise was the best suited to our institutions, and under all the circumstances was best adapted to the character of our people.¹

The memorable fight of the Liberal party against the bill greatly influenced public opinion and forced the Government to make many important amendments. The enfranchisement of the Indians of Manitoba, the Territories, and British Columbia was prevented. The income franchise and the property qualifications were reduced. Wage-earners were enfranchised. The right of appeal from revising barristers to judges was secured. The principle of uniformity of franchise for all the provinces was abandoned by the authors of the measure from the sheer impossibility of giving effect to their chief argument for its necessity. In operation the Act inflicted grave injustice upon the Liberal party, and enormously increased the cost and labour of political contests. Time and again,

¹ Hansard, April 17th, 1885.

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owing to the great outlay the system imposed upon political candidates and their agents, its operation was suspended, and it became necessary to use lists two, three, and even four years old for the purposes of bye-elections. It was never a popular measure, even with the masses of the Conservative party, and more than once influential Conservatives joined in the demand for its repeal. It was one of the first of the abuses to be struck down by the Laurier Administration, and not even the Senate could be persuaded to destroy the Act which decreed its abolition. Thus the last of all that series of measures designed by Sir John Macdonald to circumscribe the functions of the Legislatures and degrade the provincial authority joined its predecessors in the common grave of unconstitutional, impracticable, and undesirable enactments.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NORTH-WEST REBELLION

IT will be remembered that the amnesty granted to Louis Riel by the Mackenzie Government was conditional upon five years' banishment from the soil of Canada. In consequence of this sentence he had settled in Montana; but few in older Canada understood how much his name was still cherished by the half-breeds of the West, or had any adequate conception of the conditions which were slowly breeding the temper of revolt in the Metis, and surely threatening the peace of the country. Under the Manitoba Act there was granted to every half-breed born in the province before July 1st, 1870, 240 acres of land in extinguishment of the Indian title. No provision, however, was made for the half-breeds of the Territories, and it was natural that they also should demand free homesteads and look for as favourable treatment as was extended to the Metis of Manitoba.

As early as 1875 they petitioned for such recognition. As the years passed their surroundings grew more unsatisfactory and their demands more urgent. From the first their claim was strongly supported by the North-West Council. It was represented by the Council that in view of the Manitoba grants

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there would be general dissatisfaction among the half-breeds of the Territories if they did not receive like consideration. Grants of land were therefore recommended, subject to such conditions as would prevent improvident alienation and secure the permanent interest of the half-breed settlements. It is clear that the argument for provision for the half-breeds of Manitoba was equally applicable to the half-breeds of the Territories. Settlement was extending westward. The buffalo had disappeared. Conditions of life on the plains were revolutionized. The Indians were settled on reserves, and guaranteed treaty payments. All the circumstances made prompt and adequate measures for the satisfaction of the half-breed demands an imperative national obligation. This would seem to have been the view of Sir John Macdonald, who had taken charge of the Indian department upon the defeat of the Mackenzie Government. He instructed Col. Dennis, the chief officer of the department, to make an investigation and report upon the claims and circumstances of the half-breed population. Col. Dennis's report gave unequivocal support to the petitions of the Metis and the representations of the North-West Council. The half-breeds, he said, had a claim to favourable consideration. There was uneasiness in consequence of the non-recognition of their demands. It was important to have that element of the population in sympathy with the Government when dealing with

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the Plain tribes of Indians, and essential to cultivate and maintain such relations with both half-breeds and Indians as would attach them to Canada, and leave no doubt of the determination of the Government to fulfil its obligations towards them with the utmost good faith. Archdeacon McLean of the Anglican Church in the Territories strongly recommended a policy of conciliation.¹ Col. Richardson pointed out that the former occupation of the half-breeds was gone, and that they were as a class destitute and scattered among the Indians.²

Archbishop Taché, of St. Boniface, represented that a liberal policy towards the half-breeds would attract to the side of the Government a moral and physical power which in the critical relations of the various Indian tribes towards each other and towards the Government would prove of great value; while the half-breed element, if dissatisfied, would become a standing menace to the peace and prosperity of the Territories. He declared that it was largely owing to the influence of the half-breeds that we had encountered no formidable difficulties in dealing with the Indians. But with the disappearance of the buffalo, and the extension of settlement into the Indian country, the danger of Indian disturbances became imminent. It would now depend in a great measure on the treatment the half-breeds received whether or not this great peril could be

¹ Letter of January 18th, 1879.

² Letter of January 18th, 1880.

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averted.¹ Both Col. Dennis and the Archbishop urged that the half-breed claims should be settled without further delay. Accordingly, in 1879, an Act was passed authorizing the Government to make such grants of land, and on such conditions as was thought expedient, to the half-breeds of the Territories in satisfaction of their claim for the extinguishment of the Indian title.

Thus far, as Mr. Blake said, the Government acted promptly and judiciously. But here action ceased. Here the energy of Ministers was exhausted. No step was taken under this legislation, and absolutely nothing done to investigate and satisfy the claims of the half-breeds until they broke out into actual revolt six years later. Time and again the Metis renewed their petitions. Time and again the North-West Council passed resolutions in support of their demands. Time and again bishops and clergy pleaded for action at Ottawa, and urged the dangers of delay. Ministers and officers of the Government passed up and down the West and heard the bitter story of the Metis grievances, and—forgot. At Qu'Appelle in 1884, Sir Hector Langevin received a deputation of these people, heard their complaint at first hand, and promised attention and consideration. The *Toronto Mail*, still the organ of the Administration, assessing responsibility upon the Mackenzie as well as upon the

¹ Letter of Archbishop Taché to Col. Dennis, Deputy Minister of the Interior, January 29th, 1879.

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Macdonald Government, declared later that the negligence of the officials was "gross and inexcusable, and contributed to bring about the insurrection." "Had they," said *The Mail*, "had votes like white men, or if like the Indians they had been numerous enough to command respect and overcome red tape, without doubt the wheels of office would have revolved for them, but being only half-breeds they were put off with an eternal promise until patience ceased to be a virtue."¹ As in Manitoba in 1869, the work of the Dominion surveyors gave spur to the fear and irritation of the Metis. According to their custom they had settled along the rivers. Each farm had a narrow water frontage and extended far back in the form of a parallelogram. The Government system of surveys divided the country into square blocks, and thus rearranged and practically destroyed the Metis' holdings. This undoubted grievance, added to the failure to secure free homesteads, drove them to the verge of desperation, and at length led to Riel's recall from Montana.

Col. Geo. T. Denison, in his interesting reminiscences of soldiering in Canada, deals in blunt and straightforward fashion with the Government's responsibility for the subsequent outbreak. He declares that the rebellion was caused by "a remarkable instance of departmental inefficiency and stupidity." He describes the location of the half-

¹ Editorial in the *Toronto Mail*, July 8th, 1885.

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breeds on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River, near Prince Albert, and explains that some had lived in the neighbourhood for many years, while others had gone in from Fort Garry during the years following the Red River rebellion. Their farms were laid out and fenced, their houses built, and the community enjoying comfort and prosperity, when the Government surveyors appeared and proceeded to survey the land according to the uniform plan adopted in the unsettled prairies. Then the half-breeds took alarm. They pleaded and protested. The danger, impolicy, and injustice of the proceeding was urgently represented to the department at Ottawa. But all without avail. As Col. Denison says: "One can easily understand the horror of the officials of the Department of the Interior at the suggestion that their uniform system of survey should be varied in the slightest degree. Such a breach of red tape regulations could not even be considered, so the complaints became more numerous and the department more obstinate. The months went on, nothing was done, and muttering threats were heard."

Mr. Charles Mair, one of the originators of the Canada First movement, had lived for some years at Prince Albert. He knew the temper of the half-breeds, and saw that rebellion was certain if their claims were not recognized. "For two years or more before the outbreak," Col. Denison proceeds, "he had come all the way from Prince

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Albert to Ottawa, about 2,000 miles, of which 250 miles were travelled by waggon trail, to impress upon the Government the danger. He came about every six months, and was in the habit of staying a day or two with me on his way to Ottawa and on his way back. He told me each time he went down that there would be trouble; each succeeding visit he became more and more alarmed. He begged of the Government to make some concessions and warned them that there would be bloodshed." On one occasion he visited Ottawa at the head of a deputation from Prince Albert, and secured an interview with Sir John Macdonald, and also with Sir David Macpherson, who had succeeded to the office of Minister of the Interior. With full knowledge of the local conditions, and animated by no other object than to promote the contentment of the half-breeds and the security of the settlers, they laid all the facts before the Ministers, and urged prompt and adequate measures of concession and conciliation. Sir John Macdonald, at least, was impressed by their representations. He gave the deputation a patient and sympathetic hearing, and asked to have a written statement of the facts furnished for the consideration of the Government. Col. Denison says "Mair went back on that occasion more hopeful." But six months passed and nothing was done. In April, 1884, Mair came down once more and made a further appeal to the Government. Col. Denison continues: "When he

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returned to Toronto from Ottawa he told me most positively that there would be a rebellion, that the officials were absolutely indifferent and immovable, and I could not help laughing at the picture he gave me of Sir David Macpherson, a very large, handsome, erect man of six feet four inches, getting up, leaving his room, and walking away down the corridor, while Mair, a short, stout man, had almost to run alongside of him, as he made his final appeal to preserve the peace and to prevent bloodshed."

Mr. Mair was then so thoroughly convinced that a rising was inevitable that he bought a house at Windsor, returned to Prince Albert, closed out his business, and in the month of September brought his family down to Ontario to await in safety the rebellion that he so clearly foresaw, and which a fatuous Administration would not lift a finger to avert. Not even yet, however, would Mair abandon his effort to rouse the Government to the necessity for remedial measures. In December he visited Ottawa once again, and made a final earnest but ineffectual attempt to open the eyes of Ministers to the imminent peril of insurrection which threatened the peace of the western country. Col. Denison satirically observes: "As he had no interest in the matter in dispute, and was anxious simply that there should be no disturbance, his representations should have received some attention, but I suppose it would have been unconstitutional for a Government to act upon the verbal report of an outsider. There

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would be nothing to tie up neatly with red tape, and docket and file away in a pigeon hole.”¹ These facts, as disclosed by Col. Denison, furnish, perhaps, the most conclusive evidence that has yet appeared in demonstration of the Government’s responsibility for the North-West Rebellion. Nothing that was charged against the Administration by the spokesmen of the Liberal party, and nothing that the official documents reveal, more utterly condemns the Ministers who had the peace of the country in their keeping, or goes further in mitigation and justification of the leaders of the insurrection. Mair was neither a politician nor an agitator, and Col. Denison is an unprejudiced witness.²

It was under such circumstances, and as a last resort, that a deputation from the half-breeds of the St. Laurent settlement undertook a weary foot-journey of 700 miles into Montana, and persuaded Riel to return to Canada and lead the agitation for redress of their grievances and effectual recognition

¹ “Soldiering in Canada,” by Lieut.-Col. Geo. T. Denison, pages 261-264.

² “The whole dispute was over some 40,000 or 50,000 acres of land, in a wilderness of tens of millions of acres, for which the Government were crying for settlers. It cost Canada the lives of two hundred of her people, the wounding of many others, the expenditure of about \$6,000,000 in cash, and the losses of time and business that cannot be estimated. When it was all over, the Government offered free to the volunteers 1,800,000 acres of the land, if they wanted it to settle on; and yet the whole dispute was mainly about some red tape regulations as to surveying some forty or fifty thousand acres of land on which

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of their demands. This deputation comprised James Isbester, Gabriel Dumont, Moïse Oullette, and Michel Dumas. Riel seems to have yielded readily to the prayer of the deputation. He set up a partnership in their grievances. He told them that he was himself entitled to land of which he had been deprived by the Canadian Government, and that his claim was still valid notwithstanding the fact that he had become an American citizen. He returned with the deputation, and at once entered upon an active organization of the half-breeds and a vigorous assertion of their demands. At a meeting held at St. Laurent in September, a Bill of Rights was formulated. This comprehensive and extravagant instrument demanded: (1) The sub-division into provinces of the North-West Territories; (2) such grants of lands for the half-breeds of the Territories as those of Manitoba had received; (3) the immediate issue of patents to the colonists in possession; (4) the sale of half a million acres of land and the application of the proceeds thereof to the establish-

people were already settled. It is not often a country suffers so severely and so unnecessarily. . . . The volunteer corps all over the country were volunteering their services, and using every effort to be sent up to the North-West. Several of my officers came to me and asked me if I had volunteered the services of the corps. I said, 'No, I had not.' They asked me if I would not do so. I refused for two reasons,—partly because a large force was being sent to crush a few people who had been wronged and practically goaded into rebellion, but my main reason was that if they thought I wanted to go they would certainly not send me. I also said that an officer should wait for his orders."—"Soldiering in Canada," by Lieut.-Col. Geo. T. Denison, pages 265-266.

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ment in the half-breed settlements of schools and hospitals, and to the equipment of the poorer half-breeds with seed-grain, and implements; (5) the reservation of a hundred townships of swamp-land for distribution among the children of half-breeds for four succeeding generations; (6) a grant of at least \$1,000 for the maintenance of an institution to be conducted by the nuns in each half-breed settlement; and (7) better provision for the support of the Indians.

The demands covered by the second and third paragraphs were supported by Bishop Grandin of St. Albert, and by the mass of the English-speaking settlers; and while other paragraphs of the resolution set up extraordinary claims, and one at least was deliberately designed to make mischief among the Indians, there is hardly any doubt that the prompt concession of free homesteads and the issue of patents to half-breeds in legitimate possession of holdings would have completely broken down the agitation, and left Riel disarmed and impotent to disturb the peace of the Territories. Riel assured Archbishop Taché that he would employ only constitutional means in order to secure a satisfactory adjustment of the half-breed claims by the federal authorities. But his bearing was forward and insolent. He resorted to menace and intimidation. His whole attitude was calculated to alienate public sympathy and obscure the substantial merits of the cause committed to his

guardianship. As yet, however, he had counselled no irremediable step, and it was still open to Ministers to take action under the legislation of 1879, and concede the measure of consideration to which the Metis were indubitably entitled. But the wheels of office would not revolve; Ministers and officials remained dumb, unresponsive, and inactive; and at last on March 26th, 1885, the sullen and desperate half-breeds forsook prayers, petitions, and remonstrances, and broke out into open revolt.

In anticipation of trouble, the mounted police force at Prince Albert was strengthened, a detachment was posted at Carlton, and 200 men of all ranks were distributed between Battleford, Carlton, Prince Albert, and Fort Pitt. It was reported from Carlton on March 10th that the half-breeds at Duck Lake and Batoche were organizing to stop the ingoing of supplies. On the next day, twenty-five police and a seven-pounder gun were ordered to proceed from Battleford to Carlton; while on the morning of March 18th, ninety men started out from Regina for the centre of disaffection. On March 17th, a meeting of half-breeds was held at St. Laurent, at which a provisional Government was formed, with Louis Riel as President, and Gabriel Dumont as Adjutant-General. This Government proceeded to seize stores, take prisoners, and terrorize the district. Riel demanded the unconditional surrender of Carlton, and in case of refusal threatened a war of extermination. The

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Duck Lake Post, with all the Government and Indian supplies therein, was captured by the insurgents. In an attempt to recover the post and to secure the arms and ammunition, a detachment of police and a company of Prince Albert volunteers were routed by a superior force of half-breeds and Indians. Twelve of the police and volunteers were killed, and as many wounded.

The news of this disaster created intense excitement throughout the country, and moved the Government to prompt and vigorous measures for the suppression of the revolt. The 90th battalion of Winnipeg was started for the front with admirable despatch, and the call which went out to the volunteers of the older provinces was answered with an enthusiasm and patriotic ardour which revealed an unsuspected intensity and unity of national feeling. In Quebec as in Ontario, the troops got into marching order with splendid alacrity. Their departure for the West evoked extraordinary demonstrations of popular enthusiasm. On the north shore of Lake Superior the men had to cross over 100 miles of uncompleted sections of the railway in sleighs and flat-cars during the bitter weather of March and early April, and the spirit and endurance they manifested under the trying circumstances were but typical of their admirable bearing and behaviour all through the campaign. It may seem now that the country made very formidable preparations against a few hundred, or at most a few thousand

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half-breeds. But it was not fear of the half-breeds that sent the shock of alarm throughout Canada. It was the knowledge of the great influence the half-breeds exercised over the Indians, and the danger of a sympathetic Indian rising, which gave the insurrection its formidable aspect, and made it the imperative duty of the Government to send out a force far beyond the needs of the moment.

Older Canada, indeed, was filled with wild rumours and alarming speculations. As early as March 13th, Superintendent Crozier of the Mounted Police had wired,—“Troops must be largely reinforced; if half-breeds rise, Indians will join them.” We heard later that Riel had an army of 1,500 men and six American cannon. As it fortunately transpired, Riel had neither the men nor the cannon, and there was no extensive Indian rising. But there was ground for the more serious apprehensions. If Riel had gained any material successes after the engagement at Duck Lake, it might have been difficult to keep the Indians under control. As it was, Poundmaker’s tribe attacked the fort and plundered the stores at Battleford, while Big Bear’s braves massacred a group of settlers at Frog Lake, and burned and ravaged all along the North Saskatchewan. The first engagement of the troops under General Middleton was fought at Fish Creek on April 24th. The half-breeds were driven out of their rifle pits, and utterly routed. The loss among the federal troops was 6 killed and 40 wounded out of 350

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actively engaged. On April 25th Battleford was relieved. On May 1st a stern engagement was fought with Poundmaker's Indians at Cut Knife Hill. The result was effective if not decisive. On May 2nd the relieving column reached Edmonton. From May 9th to May 12th the decisive battle was fought at Batoche with losses to the half-breeds of 51 killed and 173 wounded, as against losses of 8 killed and 43 wounded among General Middleton's forces. These movements were carried out under various officers, covered a wide extent of territory, and involved long and heavy marches by the police and volunteers engaged, and necessitated much endurance, hardship, and sacrifice. But the fall of Batoche and the capture of Riel practically ended the campaign. On May 24th Poundmaker and his Indians, with about 150 half-breeds, surrendered to General Middleton at Battleford. Big Bear, who fled north before Middleton, released his prisoners, and was finally captured on July 2nd in the neighbourhood of Carlton. At the close of the rebellion there were seventy-three prisoners in the hands of the Canadian authorities. Many of these were discharged and others acquitted. Jackson of Prince Albert, who had acted as Riel's secretary, was found to be insane and sent to the Selkirk Asylum, whence he escaped to the United States. Big Bear, Poundmaker, and various Indians and half-breeds who had been active in the insurrection, were sentenced to fitting terms of imprisonment.

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Eight of the Indians convicted of the murders at Frog Lake and elsewhere, were hanged at Battleford. Three who had received death sentences escaped with life imprisonment.

Riel was indicted for high treason, tried at Regina, and found guilty. The plea of insanity set up by his counsel was not entertained. After the Court had received the verdict, one of the jurors intimated that he had been asked by his fellows to recommend the prisoner to the mercy of the Crown, and Mr. Justice Richardson, before whom he was tried, duly forwarded the recommendation to the federal authorities. Riel was sentenced to be hanged on September 18th, and on appeal taken to the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba, the judgment was confirmed. It was then sought to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but leave to prosecute the appeal was denied. He was, however, reprieved from September 18th to October 16th, again to November 12th, and yet again to November 16th in order that his mental condition could be considered by medical experts. But at length all pleas, protests, and representations were exhausted, and with calmness and fortitude he met his death on the gallows in the yard of the Mounted Police Barracks at Regina.

The medical evidence discredited, or at least did not support the theory of insanity. Dr. Jukes, senior surgeon of the Mounted Police, who attended Riel during his imprisonment at Regina, said : " I cannot

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escape the conviction that except on purely religious questions relating to what may be called divine mysteries, he was, when entrusted to my care, and still continues to be, sane and accountable for his actions. . . . I therefore record my opinion that, with the reservation above made, Riel is a sane, clear-headed, and accountable being before God and man." Dr. Valade, Government analyst of Ottawa, reported to the authorities that while Riel suffered under hallucinations on political and religious questions, on other points he was quite sensible; and Dr. Lavell, warden of Kingston Penitentiary concluded that although Riel held and expressed peculiar views as to religion and general government, he was an accountable being, and capable of distinguishing right from wrong. Dr. Wallace, superintendent of the Hamilton Asylum, in giving evidence at the trial, said he could distinguish no evidences of insanity, while Dr. Roy, of the Beauport Asylum, testified that Riel had been confined in that institution for nineteen months in 1877 and 1878, and that he was satisfied that his insanity had returned. Dr. Daniel Clark, superintendent of the Asylum for the Insane at Toronto, who also gave evidence at the trial, dealt at some length with Riel's mental condition in a letter published by the *Toronto Globe* a few weeks after the execution. He said:

"I spoke to some of the half-breeds who were in all his fights, and they said positively that Riel was apparently rational enough until the Duck Lake

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fight, and that after the excitement of that fight he seemed to have changed entirely and become a religious fanatic; he organized no opposition, did no fighting, but was looked upon as inspired—running about with a crucifix and calling upon the Trinity for aid. The organizers of the avowed opposition were Dumont and Dumais. On the question of the previous history of Riel the defence was particularly weak in some strong points which would have told for Riel. There was evidence in existence of his having been committed legally to an asylum in Washington, also of his having been committed legally to Longue Pointe, Montreal, but no evidence was given except in the case of the Beauport asylum at Quebec. . . . My statement at the trial was to the effect that from the evidence I would consider him insane, but that I was not prepared to say so from my short examination. I watched him closely after this time during the trial, and had another interview with him. I heard him address the jury, and saw a number of letters he wrote, which he had no idea would be made public. All these examinations convinced me that had he been an obscure man there is not an asylum in Christendom but would have committed him on the evidence, and legally so; but because he had been the indirect cause of a deplorable outbreak, his mental condition became of secondary importance, as political exigencies arose paramount.”¹

¹ *Toronto Globe*, January 18th, 1885.

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In a further communication to *The Globe* three days afterwards, he added: "I never dreamed that Riel would be executed, knowing so much uncertainty existed in respect to his mental state, and seeing that one specialist stated he was insane, and one swore to his insanity."

During the progress of the rebellion the Liberal party in the House of Commons acted with moderation and patriotism. Even in Quebec the agitation against the Government did not get quite out of hand. It was recognized that law and order must be vindicated, the safety of the Western settlers secured, and the Indians kept in subjection; and that under such circumstances to embarrass the Administration and turn the high court of Parliament into a forum for useless and dangerous agitation would be very like treason to the Confederation. But the moment the insurrection was put down, the Liberal leaders regained their freedom of action, and proceeded to establish the Government's responsibility for the outbreak, and to hold the guilty and neglectful Ministers to account.

In the Quebec Legislature a mischievous and premature resolution of censure on the federal authorities was offered during March, and was hotly debated while the French Canadian regiments were on their way to the front to aid in suppressing the revolt. This resolution declared that the Legislative Assembly had learned with the deepest regret of the unfortunate events which

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had occurred in the North-West, but could not approve of the settlement of the disturbance by force of arms and bloodshed. It alleged that the rising was caused by failure to settle the equitable claims of the half-breeds and by the neglect and incapacity of the federal authorities. It held the Government to account for the blood which had been shed in the quarrel, and particularly denounced the culpable neglect of the Minister of the Interior and the incapacity of the Minister of Militia. It urged the Lieutenant Governor in Council to consider the advisability of recommending a vote of money to assist the families of the volunteers, and asked to have a copy of the address sent to the Secretary of State for the Dominion. Only fifteen out of fifty-six votes were cast for the resolution. But the division represented the political alliance between the provincial Government and the federal authorities rather than the sentiment of the Legislature or of the province. The tide of sympathy for Riel and the half-breeds rose steadily higher in Quebec, and soon swept all other issues into the back-ground. The provincial Government sought, and sought wisely, to avoid entanglement in the question, while many of the Liberal politicians and journals strove to excite the prejudices and inflame the passions of the people against the leaders of the Conservative party, alike in provincial and in federal politics, and to burn up all other issues in the popular wrath over the execution of Riel and the

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Government's long and stubborn neglect of the western half-breeds.

Mr. Honoré Mercier was then the leader of the Liberal party in Quebec. No more brilliant figure has ever passed across the stage of Canadian politics. He was a man of great personal fascination, ardent, persuasive, bold and resolute. He could move and mould a Quebec audience to his will with a skill and power that even Mr. Chapleau never surpassed. In other days he could have made revolutions. In his less responsible moments there was even the hint of revolution in some of his more inflammatory appeals to the Quebec Nationalists. If he had used his great powers and engaging qualities to impose a moderate, conservative, and economical programme upon his province, he had gifts and capacities to serve Quebec and Canada which few of our statesmen have possessed. But he did not exercise that control over himself or his Administration which a proper recognition of his duties and responsibilities demanded; and consequently his ascendancy in Quebec was often a cause of uneasiness to the Liberals of the other provinces, while his ultimate political downfall and untimely death have all the aspects of a tragedy. It may be that like many other men of equal faults and follies he would have redeemed his career if he had lived, done useful and enduring work for his province and his country, and filled a more luminous chapter in Canadian history.

The execution of Riel was the signal for a

supreme attack upon Sir John Macdonald and his French Ministers, and for the precipitance of an agitation which absolutely revolutionized political conditions in Quebec. Two days before the death-sentence upon Riel was carried into effect, sixteen or seventeen of the French Conservative members of the House of Commons united in a telegram to Sir John Macdonald in which they declared that, "Under the circumstances, the execution of Louis Riel would be an act of cruelty, for which we decline to be responsible." There is no doubt that up to this time the agitation among the Conservatives of Quebec was secretly encouraged by the French Ministers at Ottawa, who hoped through pressure of Quebec opinion to save Riel from the gallows. A few days after Riel's death a great meeting was held on the Champ de Mars at Montreal, at which speeches were made in strenuous denunciation of the execution, and in terms of unmeasured condemnation of the federal Government. Among the speakers were Mr. Laurier and Mr. Mercier, as representing the Liberal party, and Mr. C. J. Coursol and Mr. Alphonse Desjardins, both supporters hitherto of Sir John Macdonald, and influential leaders in the Conservative party of Quebec. The resolutions which the great meeting adopted with wild enthusiasm declared that the half-breeds, both French and English, had grievances which were the occasion of the political offence for which their chief was executed;

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that civilized nations had practically abandoned capital punishment for political offences ; that Riel had been recommended to the clemency of the court by jurymen of a different race and creed from his own, and therefore clemency should have been exercised ; that as three respites had been granted and the execution thrice postponed, this duty became all the more imperative ; that the Government had made of the execution a simple subject of election calculations, and had coolly computed how many seats would be won by hanging Riel, and how many lost by a policy of clemency and justice ; that in giving effect to its calculations it had sacrificed Riel to the hatred of fanatics and allowed them to stir up against one another the different races who in this country lived together under the protection of the British flag ; that in executing Riel the Government of Sir John Macdonald had committed an act of inhumanity and cruelty unworthy of a civilized nation, and deserved the condemnation of all friends of right and justice without distinction of race or religion ; that the consent given by Sir Hector Langevin, Sir Adolphe Caron, and Mr. Chapleau to the execution constituted a betrayal of their trust, and specially deserved the reprobation of all the citizens of Quebec ; that it had become the duty of the electors of each constituency to exact from its representative in the House of Commons a formal pledge to defeat the Government of Sir John Macdonald by every

constitutional means at their command; and that the circumstances demanded that all divisions of political parties, of races, and of creeds be put aside, and that all men who were so disposed, whatever might have been their former differences of opinion, should unite to accomplish the objects set forth in the resolutions,—in other words, to overthrow the Macdonald Government.

These resolutions were adopted by many municipal councils and many public meetings throughout Quebec, and naturally the inflammatory utterances of the press and of many of the politicians of the French province nourished the counter-agitation in Ontario. For a time all that was done for national consolidation by the blood and sacrifice of the soldiers on the plains of the West, threatened to be undone by the warfare of the politicians and the intense racial antagonisms which the situation developed. The *Toronto Mail* gave energetic voice to the dominant opinion of Ontario. In a series of striking and vehement articles it squarely and defiantly challenged the position of the politicians of Quebec. It even declared that it would be better that Confederation should be smashed into its original fragments than that the country should eternally submit to the dictation of the French province.¹

¹ We challenge the press of Quebec and Montreal to point to a wrong wittingly done, or to name any country in the wide world where the rights of a minority have been more conscientiously respected. As this is a time for the plainest speaking, let us add that the sincere desire of the English provinces to do right by Lower Canada has undoubtedly

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Naturally *The Mail's* utterances added fuel to the agitation in Quebec, and as it was regarded as the chief mouthpiece of the Government, its attitude was resented by the French-speaking members of the Cabinet, and it is believed was even severely disapproved and discouraged by Sir John Macdonald. It is impossible to know all the facts that led to the estrangement between *The Mail* and the Conservative leader, but there is at least no doubt that from this time dated the misunderstanding which was not healed while the old Conservative statesman lived. *The Mail* stood its ground without flinching, passed by calculated stages into the field of independent journalism, and remained an influential factor in the public life of the country.

The great majority of the Liberal journals and politicians of Ontario were slow to demand the commutation of Riel's sentence, and distinctly hesitated to condemn the execution. It is perhaps not hampered their material progress. The English-speaking majority in the United States would never have tolerated the demands which the British portion of Canada has cheerfully complied with, much less submitted to the maintenance of those peculiar institutions which British Canada has fostered as though they had been her own. Yet after all our efforts to establish amicable relations with them, even at the sacrifice of prosperity, the French Canadians are now seeking to compel us to recognize their right to suspend the operation of the law whenever a representative of their race is in the toils. But let us solemnly assure them again that, rather than submit to such a yoke, Ontario would smash Confederation into its original fragments, preferring that the dream of a united Canada should be shattered forever, than that unity should be purchased at the price of equality.—Editorial in the *Toronto Mail*, November 23rd, 1885.

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uncharitable to suggest that if his life had been spared the Ministers would have had to meet an attack in Ontario hardly less violent than that which the execution brought down upon their heads in Quebec. In fact, some of the Liberal papers demanded the execution which they subsequently condemned. In some of its phases there is no uglier chapter in our political history. There was overwhelming evidence to prove the Government's responsibility for the rebellion. But Riel was a poor and sordid figure to set in the forefront of the agitation, while the violence of the attack in Quebec reacted to the advantage of the Government in the other provinces. The country did not forget that Mr. Blake had offered a reward for the punishment of Scott's murderers, that in past times Riel had been treated with great leniency, that he had become an American citizen, and had ceased to be a legitimate participant in the grievances of the Metis. In fact, Riel's leadership of the revolt prejudiced public opinion against the half-breeds, and the defence of his record and personality by the Quebec nationalists could not command the hearty assent of the masses of the English-speaking people.

Nor can it be thought that the Liberal party occupied strong ground in seeking to prove that Riel was insane. He was equal to the leadership of the insurrection, and therefore fairly amenable to the consequences of his action. It is true that his behaviour in court at Regina was eccentric, that

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his addresses to the court in his own defence, which the judge permitted, were disconnected, illogical, pompous, and puerile, that he claimed to be "the prophet of the new world," that he had used wild threats against the Canadian authorities, that he had manifested extraordinary religious vagaries, and composed rhapsodical rubbish in prose and verse of mysterious purpose and texture. But the evidences of insanity were not obtrusive until his neck was in danger, and hardly survived the conviction that his sentence would not be finally commuted. Riel, in fact, was much more blameworthy than the Metis who followed him into revolt, and the Liberals would have done well if they had set him in the background, refused to make him the central figure of a separate issue, and confined their attack to the Government's callous and persistent neglect to remedy the admitted grievances of the Western half-breeds.

Mr. Blake was in Europe when Riel was executed, and for some time afterwards. There was profound interest, and even some anxiety, as to the pronouncement he would make on the execution, and the agitation which that event had developed in the Province of Quebec. His first utterance on these questions was made at London on January 14th, 1886. He told the country that he did not propose to construct a political platform out of the Regina scaffold, or to create or cement party ties with the blood of the condemned. Other

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features of his address, however, made it plain that he was disposed to raise the question of Riel's mental condition, and also challenge the wisdom and justice of the execution. He deprecated inflammatory agitation either in Ontario or Quebec, and said: "I hope and trust that the excitement having somewhat abated, the further discussion in the press and among the people may be more tranquil, that rash and hasty language may be avoided, and that when we meet in Parliament we may engage in the debate in a temper and after a fashion suitable to our national dignity and regardful of our national unity."

In the closing weeks of the session of 1885, Mr. Blake had brought on a motion in Parliament condemnatory of the Government's administration of North-West affairs, and it is not too much to say that the country was deeply impressed by the strength and completeness of the indictment. Mr. Blake's parliamentary career furnishes no better illustration of his grasp and thoroughness, and Mr. Laurier excelled even his chief in his eloquent, resourceful, and masterly arraignment of the Government. On July 6th, Mr. Blake had moved, "That in the administration of North-West affairs by the present Government, prior to the recent outbreak, there have occurred grave instances of neglect, delay, and mismanagement in matters affecting the peace, welfare, and good government of the country." Mr. Laurier spoke in the debate in reply to Sir John Macdonald. He produced overwhelming

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evidence to prove that for years the Government had been deaf to all petitions and remonstrances in behalf of the half-breeds, that their homes were invaded—not accidentally, but deliberately—under the policy of the Government for the survey of the country, and that even men who had settled on their lands before the country was transferred to Canada had lines run across their fields, splitting up farms and fields, putting the fields on one side and the buildings on the other, and yet “delegation after delegation to this Government for redress had been constantly refused redress.” He argued that Riel would have been impotent for mischief if the half-breeds had not had deep-seated and long-felt grievances. He proved his point by a noble and eloquent reference to Papineau. He described Papineau’s wonderful power over the people of Quebec during the struggle for responsible government, and then showed how ineffective was his agitation for the repeal of the Act of Union when the grievances of the French Canadians had been redressed.

Mr. Laurier’s speech on this occasion is a conspicuous and characteristic example of his oratory. The extract we quote, fine as it is, is scarcely above the level of the whole speech: “Few men have there been anywhere who have wielded greater sway over their fellow-countrymen than did Mr. Papineau at a certain time in the history of Lower Canada, and no man ever lived who had been more

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profusely endowed by nature to be the idol of a nation. A man of commanding presence, of majestic countenance, of impassioned eloquence, of unblemished character, of pure, disinterested patriotism, for years and years he held over the hearts of his fellow countrymen almost unbounded sway, and even to this day the mention of his name will arouse throughout the length and breadth of Lower Canada a thrill of enthusiasm in the breasts of all, men or women, old or young. What was the secret of that great power he held at one time? Was it simply his eloquence, his commanding intellect, or even his pure patriotism? No doubt they all contributed; but the main cause of his authority over his fellow countrymen was this, that at that time they were an oppressed race and he was the champion of their cause. But when the day of relief came, the influence of Mr. Papineau, however great it might have been and however great it still remained, ceased to be paramount."

Mr. Laurier examined into the causes of the rebellion of 1869, and showed that then the half-breeds had complained, first, that Canada had taken possession of their country without respect for their rights as a people, and secondly, that by the system of survey the Government had invaded their actual possessions and properties. He declared that Ministers had learned nothing from the deplorable events of that period, and now by neglect, indifference, and incurable obduracy had caused an uprising on the

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Saskatchewan. He met the charge that the Mackenzie Government was equally indifferent to the claims of the Western half-breeds by showing that Mr. Laird, who was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories by that Government, did not reach Battleford until 1877, and that in response to petitions his Council recommended: "That in view of the fact that grants of land and issues of scrip were made to the half-breeds of Manitoba toward the extinguishment of the Indian title to the lands of that province, there will be general dissatisfaction among the half-breeds of the Territories unless they receive some like consideration." He pointed out that the fall of the Mackenzie Government made it impossible for Liberal Ministers to give effect to this policy, and that in 1879 the Government still in office took power, and power which it failed to exercise, to deal with the half-breeds after the manner suggested by Mr. Laird and the North-West Council. He recalled the advice of Archbishop Taché, and declared that in face of all the evidence, it was his opinion that Sir John Macdonald had refused to act because he was opposed in principle and in practice to the extinguishment of the Indian title in so far as it was vested in the half-breeds. The policy of the Statute book, however, was that the half-breeds were entitled just as much as the Indians to the extinguishment of the Indian title, although as white men they were empowered to take compensation individually instead of collectively.

The Government would yield nothing except upon compulsion. Four days after the fight at Duck Lake, Ministers came down with an order-in-council proposing to grant lands to the half-breeds, not, however, in extinguishment of the Indian title, but with conditions of settlement. Commissioners were forthwith appointed and sent out to the disturbed districts; and when they advised that conditions of settlement should not be exacted, but that special grants should be made, as in the case of the Manitoba half-breeds, the Government finally surrendered and conceded to violence what it would not yield to prayers, petitions, and proper constitutional agitation.

It was so also in the case of those half-breeds who had not been enumerated in Manitoba, but claimed the right, and doubtless had the right, to special land grants. They had petitioned the Government, the North-West Council had petitioned the Government in their behalf, and friends of the Government in the West had petitioned, and all without avail. But when rebellion broke out on the Saskatchewan, Ministers came to their knees, and again conceded to violence what they would not concede to respectful petitions and legitimate representations. The Government, Mr. Laurier remarked, had not even the courage of Falstaff, who said, "Were reasons as plentiful as berries I would not give a reason upon compulsion."

He came next to the claim of the half-breeds

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that they should not be disturbed in their holdings, and pointed out that it was the world-wide and immemorial custom of the French people to divide their lands into narrow strips, and to live as close to one another as the circumstances of the country would allow. This was the fashion adopted by the half-breeds of the Saskatchewan, and he showed that in a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories in 1877, the Hon. David Mills, then Minister of the Interior, had said: "The programme of the special survey-party provides for the work being extended during the coming season to intersect the Saskatchewan in the vicinity of the principal settlements on that river. It is proposed in all cases where settlements have been formed along the rivers in the territory, to adapt the surveys to the farms as existing, that is to say, giving a frontage often of twenty chains on the river, and running the lots back so as to give 160 acres." This was to recognize the form of the half-breed holdings and avoid forcing the rectangular survey upon communities which had laid out their farms and established their homes after the traditional fashion of the French people. This policy was reversed by the Conservative Government, and the system substituted therefor was resolutely pursued in spite of petitions and remonstrances from the half-breeds, and even from agents of the Administration. The tyranny was still practised and justice still refused. He declared that it was not against the Queen but against the

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tyranny of the Canadian Government that the half-breeds had rebelled, and he concluded: "This I say, and I say it coming from a province where, less than fifty years ago, every man of the race to which I belong was a rebel, and where to-day every man of that race is a true and loyal subject, as true and as loyal as any that breathes,—I say, give these men justice, give them freedom, give them their rights, treat them as for the last forty years you have treated the people of Lower Canada, and by and by, throughout those territories you will have contentment, peace, and harmony, where to-day discord, hatred, and war are ruining the land."¹ This was able and eloquent advocacy, and it can hardly be doubted that the case which Mr. Laurier made out against the Administration was conclusive and even overwhelming.

During the session of 1886, Mr. Landry, the Conservative member for Montmagny, moved, "That this House feels it its duty to express its deep regret that the sentence of death passed upon Louis Riel convicted of high treason, was allowed to be carried into execution." In amendment Sir Hector Langevin moved that the question be now put. Mr. Landry protested his good faith, but the object of the manœuvre was very apparent. The member for Montmagny acted in the interest if not at the direct instigation of the Government. It was well understood that upon the question of the justice

¹ Hansard, July 7th, 1885.

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and expediency of Riel's execution there was great diversity of opinion among Liberals, while they were absolutely united upon the question of the Government's responsibility for the insurrection. It was therefore important that the Landry motion should not be amended, and that the Liberal members of the House should be forced squarely to condemn or approve Riel's execution. This purpose was accomplished by Sir Hector Langevin's amendment, which under the rules of Parliament shut out any further amendment, and thus enabled the Government to frame the indictment and narrow the issue to the single question of the execution.

Mr. Laurier contributed to this debate one of the most brilliant and powerful addresses he has ever delivered. It is a keen and searching analysis of the Government's dealings with the half-breeds, and a stern arraignment of the fatuity, stupidity, and inhumanity of its Western policy from the first unwise rejection of the petitions of the Metis down to the execution of the leader of the insurrection. Mr. Laurier took occasion in this speech to protest against the attacks of some of the Conservative journals of Ontario upon the French people of Quebec. It was not true, he said, that "it was the present intention of the French Canadian leaders to organize a purely French Canadian party, to lay aside all party ties, and to have no other bonds of party in this House but the tie of race. I protest against any such assertion. It is

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calculated to do harm. It is not founded on truth. It would be simply suicidal to French Canadians to form a party by themselves. Why, so soon as French Canadians, who are in the minority in this House and in the country, were to organize as a political party, they would compel the majority to organize as a political party, and the result must be disastrous to themselves. We have only one way of organizing parties. The country must be governed and can be governed simply on questions of policy and administration, and French Canadians who have had any part in this movement have never had any other intention but to organize upon those party distinctions and upon no other.”¹

This was what he had said ten years before when the Conservative leaders were striving to organize the Catholics of Quebec into a solid party; this is what he said ten years later when his eo-religionists and compatriots in Quebec were asked to condemn his attitude on the Manitoba school question; and this is the language he has uttered at every crisis in the history of Confederation in which considerations of race and creed have inflamed the public temper, obscured the public judgment, and threatened the disruption of the Confederation. But he could not escape the responsibility for intemperate utterances in Quebec any more than Sir John Macdonald could quite evade responsibility for

¹ Hansard, March 16th, 1886, page 175.

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intemperate utterances in Ontario. In Quebec the Conservative leader had to take the consequences of the general character of the agitation in the chief English province, just as Mr. Blake and Mr. Laurier had to take the consequences of the general character of the agitation in French Canada. Free speech and a free press are still the very bulwarks of British institutions, but sometimes these great agencies of freedom and progress make the work of responsible statesmen exceedingly onerous and difficult.

Dealing with the disputed question of Riel's sanity, Mr. Laurier said: "That he was insane seems to me beyond the possibility of controversy. When the reports first came last spring and in the early summer of his doings and sayings in the North-West, when we heard that he was to establish monarchies in the North-West, that he was to depose the Pope and establish an American pope, those who did not know him believed he was an impostor, but those who knew him knew at once what was the matter with him. In the Province of Quebec there was not an instant's hesitation about it. Almost every man in that province knew that he had been several times confined in asylums, and therefore it was manifest to the people of Quebec that he had fallen into one of those misfortunes with which he was afflicted. When his counsel were engaged, and commenced to prepare for his trial, they saw at once that if justice to him, and

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only justice to him was to be done, their plea should be a plea of insanity." He argued, as he had argued on many other occasions, that for this and other reasons the recommendation to mercy should have been respected, and that considerations outside the events on the Saskatchewan should not have influenced the Government. "The death of Scott," he said, "is the cause of the death of Riel to-day;" and touching the murder of Scott he observed: "I must say that I have always held the view that it was one of the most painful tragedies that has ever occurred in the life of any country; it is one of those acts for which there could be no possible excuse, unless the excuse we now have that the man's mind was unsound." He insisted, however, that it was now too late to punish Riel for that offence, and that the events of 1870 could not now be used to justify the course of the Government. He told the House that he could not look upon Riel as a hero. "At his worst he was a fit subject for an asylum; at his best he was a religious and political monomaniac." He quoted freely from notable historical examples to prove the unwisdom of political executions, urged the speedy release of rebels still confined in North-West prisons, insisted that the substantial reforms conceded by the Government were ample vindication of Riel and his associates, and declared, "Their country has conquered with their martyrdom, and if we look at that one fact alone there was cause sufficient, independent

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of all others, to extend mercy to the one who is dead and to those who live.”¹

The speech made a deep impression upon Parliament and the country. Even Ministers who combatted his arguments and rejected his conclusions bore tribute to the charm, the eloquence, the dignity, and the power of the address.² The Hon. Thos. White, then Minister of the Interior, said: “I think it is a matter of common pride to us that any public man in Canada can make, on the floor of Parliament, such a speech as we listened to last night.”³ Sir Adolphe Caron said: “I think I am expressing the opinion of all my friends, which opinion has already been expressed by my honourable colleague, the Minister of the Interior, in saying that we all feel proud in having as a member of this House the honourable member for Quebec East in view of the speech which he made last night. It was a speech of which I believe I am safe in saying any Parliament could be proud, and in

¹ Hansard, March 16th, 1886, pages 175 to 185.

² We intend no hyperbole, no exaggerated assertion, in saying that if Mr. Laurier's noble speech of Monday night had been delivered before a congregation of the Orange Lodges of Ontario, he would have captured the approbation of his hearers. In saying so we do bare justice to the Orangemen. They are often bigoted and narrow, and generally intolerant. They cherish memories of old hates. Their fantastic devotion to what they define as “loyalty” often leads them astray. But they have free-born hearts that thrill to the recollections of the glorious days when the founders of their order stood in battle array for liberty, and helped to beat down forever the doctrine of non-resistance to tyranny.—Editorial in *Toronto Globe*, March 18th, 1886.

³ Hansard, 1886, page 191.

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discussing the question which to him, coming from the Province of Quebec, as to me coming from the same province, is one certainly which must have appealed to his feelings, as he showed it did during the delivery of that speech—I say he has conducted the discussion in such a way as I hope will have a beneficial effect upon the whole debate.”¹ The Hon. Edward Blake added this hearty tribute to the brilliant performance of his deskmate: “I agree in the observation which was thrown out from the opposite side of the House the other day as to the general tone and temper of the debate so far; and I hailed with extreme pleasure the courteous and kindly compliments which were paid to my honourable friend beside me by two of the Ministers, on his speech of the other evening. It is to my mind the crowning proof of French domination. My honourable friend, not content with having for this long time in his own tongue borne away the palm of Parliamentary eloquence, has invaded ours, and in that field has pronounced a speech, which in my humble judgment, merits this compliment, because it is the truth, that it was the finest parliamentary speech ever pronounced in the Parliament of Canada since Confederation.”²

Mr. Laurier bore an arduous part in the campaign which preceded the general election of 1887. He addressed tumultuous and excited meetings all

¹ Hansard, 1886, page 195.

² Hansard, 1886, page 237.

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over the Province of Quebec, and spoke with Mr. Blake at Toronto, London, Windsor, and Peterborough, in the Province of Ontario. There were hostile demonstrations at the London meeting, and an unfriendly element invaded the meeting at Toronto. But it was hard to resist the courtesy, the patience, the manly bearing and resolute temper of the eloquent leader of the French Liberals. On both occasions he won at last a sympathetic hearing, and boldly addressed to his audiences every argument in mitigation of the conduct of the half-breeds of the West, and in condemnation of the Government, that he had used in Quebec and in Parliament. It was at Toronto that he said: "We have learned to love British institutions, because in British institutions we have found more freedom than we could have had as subjects of France; and how many times in that grand old city which I have the honour to represent, looking at the banner of St. George waving over her proud citadel, how many times have I said to myself that that flag represented the defeat of my ancestors, but at the same time recalled the thought that it was the flag the most precious to the human race, the flag of liberty." He knew that French Canadians were reproached with having kept their individuality as a race, and on that account it was charged that they were "wanting in loyalty." "But," he said, "I fail to see the justice of the reproach. I admit that we retain our language, our religion, and our characteristics,

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but I cannot see the justice of the reproach; and more, it seems to me that we would not have been worthy of any esteem, or of the name of French Canadians, if we had not kept sacred the memories of our forefathers. So I repeat, I love England, I honour and esteem English institutions. I do not regret that we are now subjects of the Queen instead of France, but may my right hand wither at my side if the memories of my forefathers ever cease to be dear to my heart." He added: "I am of French origin and have the pride of my race; in politics I am an English Liberal. The principles which I profess are the outgrowth of study and reflection, and did not come to me from the land of my ancestors. They came to me from England, from the great mother of modern liberty. I belong to the school of those men who fill the pages of English history, who always faced the great to get the right. I belong to the school of Hampden and Pym, of Russell and Somers and of Burke, and of one who did not hesitate, we read, on one occasion, to say to the Ministers of the Crown that they had not behaved as they should have towards the colonies which were then in rebellion, and to say that they had provoked that rebellion, just as Ministers since have provoked a rebellion."¹

Mr. Blake said at London that he would not seek to make the execution of Riel a party question.

¹ Speech at Toronto, December 10th, 1886.

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But in the constituencies, if not in Parliament, a party must accept responsibility for the policy of its leaders. It is rarely that an independent vote brings strength to an individual representative. Before the country the Liberal party stood committed to Mr. Blake's position on the rebellion and on the execution. The Government's responsibility for the revolt was established to the satisfaction of the great body of Liberals in all the provinces. But in so far as Riel was concerned, whether the fact be ascribed to prejudice or to deliberate, independent, patriotic reasoning, it is still true that the mass of Liberals in the English speaking provinces secretly sanctioned, if they did not openly applaud, the execution. Mr. Mackenzie and Sir Richard Cartwright were not persuaded that the execution was a mistake, and in Quebec Mr. Joly resigned his seat in the Legislature in protest against the more extreme features of the agitation maintained by Mr. Mercier and his associates.¹

It is hard to think that the events of the North-West Rebellion constituted legitimate issues in the local politics of Quebec, any more than that the murder of Scott was a proper question to introduce

¹ Landry's motion condemning the execution of Riel was defeated by 146 to 52. Twenty-four English-speaking Reformers voted with the majority and against Mr. Blake and Mr. Laurier. Fifteen of these belonged to Ontario, and among them were Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Richard Cartwright, John Charlton, James Sutherland, William Paterson, Thos. Bain and William Mulock. Only one English-speaking representative from Quebec voted for the motion.

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into the local politics of Ontario. But Mr. Mercier deliberately elevated these issues above all other questions of public policy, overthrew the provincial Conservative Government, and up to the hour of his dismissal from office in 1891, maintained his alliance with the Conservative Nationalists, by whom he was enabled to accomplish this result. In the field of federal affairs, where the issues by which Mr. Mercier profited were wholly legitimate, Mr. Blake was less fortunate, and even in Quebec the candidates of Mr. Blake and Mr. Laurier received much less support than the candidates of Mr. Mercier. The truth is that Mr. Blake and Mr. Laurier were constitutional statesmen and unequal to a policy of immoderation on any serious public question. Altogether, the Liberal party of the Dominion reaped no substantial benefit from the Government's deplorable mismanagement of North-West affairs, and the agitation which swept Mr. Mercier into office. That agitation weakened Mr. Blake and Mr. Laurier in the English-speaking counties, while the Catholic bishops, who afterwards maintained very cordial relations with Mr. Mercier, manifested small sympathy with the movement against Sir John Macdonald, and exercised upon the whole a restraining and moderating influence. It is true that many of the former supporters of Sir John Macdonald were elected in Quebec on the platform of the Opposition, but when they had secured their seats and the Government had again

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carried the country, they dropped back into their old party relationships. Sir John Macdonald remained the past-master in the science of party management.

The Irish Catholics of Ontario were not greatly influenced by the agitation in Quebec, nor even by Mr. Blake's energetic advocacy of the cause of Home Rule for Ireland. There has seldom been any firm alliance between the French Canadians of Quebec and the Irish Catholic element of Canada. This is probably due, in some measure to a singular social and racial antipathy, and perhaps also in lesser degree to the appointment of French bishops to Irish dioceses, and the establishment of French priests in Irish parishes. It is no secret that the Irish element feel that the French section of the Church enjoys an undue share of clerical patronage, and that the effect upon the relationships of Irish Catholics and French Canadians is not always salutary. In the main, Sir John Macdonald's treatment of the Irish Catholic minority, as also of the French Canadians, was generous and conciliatory, and hence French Canadian and Irish Catholic Conservatives were not easily detached from his standard. It is due to this fact as much as to the Franchise Act and the timely distribution of a heavy campaign fund, that he was not beaten in 1887. If judgment had been delivered upon the merits of his policy and administration in the North-West, not all the fiery eloquence of Mr. Chapleau

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in Quebec, nor all the solid legal skill of Sir John Thompson in Parliament and on the platform, nor even his own bluff, bold, and reminiscent appeals to the constituencies he knew so well, could have turned aside the nation's displeasure, and saved his Ministry from decisive defeat.¹

¹ Morgan's *Annual Register* for 1885 has an excellent chapter on the North-West Rebellion.

PART II

CHAPTER XVII

A CONTRAST IN LEADERSHIP

AT two o'clock in the morning of April 28th, 1880, the House of Commons received an important communication. The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie rose just before adjournment and announced that he had determined to withdraw from the position of leader of the Opposition, and henceforth would speak and act only for himself. It was a thin House which received this unexpected statement, and for a moment dead silence rested over the Chamber. Then the leader of the Government, who must always be ready with the timely word and the fitting counsel, rose and said: "Of course we on this side of the House have nothing to say to such a decision. I hope the honourable gentleman who takes the place of the honourable member for Lambton, and his party, will display the same ability, earnestness, and zeal for what he thinks and believes to be for the good of the country as have been displayed by my honourable friend who has just taken his seat." There was a murmur of sympathetic applause, the House rose, Sir John Macdonald and Sir Leonard Tilley crossed the floor, and with grave kindness expressed their regret at Mr. Mackenzie's withdrawal, while the press

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correspondents hurried down from the gallery to put upon the wires the fact of Mr. Mackenzie's resignation, and the circumstances under which his decision was communicated to Parliament. "There was," said a Conservative writer of the time, "a certain sadness about the act of Mr. Mackenzie's resignation of his seat as leader of the Opposition. It was two o'clock in the morning. The House was weary. The members had all fled save the small band that usually remains on each side to the end; and at that hour, to that audience, and in a tone which witnessed some degree of suffering, Mr. Mackenzie communicated his resolve. We quite understand the ready natural kindness of Sir John Macdonald's reply. Statesmen seldom fail to regret the partial or total eclipse of foemen worthy of their steel; and as leader of the Opposition Mr. Mackenzie has proved himself in former, as well as in present times, a foeman worthy of any man's steel."

Mr. Mackenzie's statement was unexpected; yet for many months rumour had been busy with the name of Mr. Edward Blake in connection with the Liberal leadership, and there was a general impression in the country that a change was impending. In fact, many Liberal journals had openly advocated the appointment of Mr. Blake in the event of Mr. Mackenzie's resignation, while Mr. Mackenzie's parliamentary associates knew that his health was failing, and that he must soon prove

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physically unequal to the cares, burdens, and responsibilities of the office. Owing chiefly to absence from the country, Mr. Blake was defeated in South Bruce at the general election of 1878; but through the resignation of Mr. Burk a vacancy was created in West Durham, and in the autumn of 1879 he returned to Parliament as the representative of that constituency. It was thought when this vacancy was created for Mr. Blake that an immediate change in the leadership was contemplated. For many months the Conservative press had hinted at a conspiracy to depose Mr. Mackenzie in revenge for the defeat of the party under his premiership.¹ But Mr. Mackenzie served as leader during all of 1879, and as we have seen, until the closing days of the session of 1880.

There was ground, however, for the suspicion that his leadership had become unsatisfactory to the Liberal parliamentary party. Not once during the session of 1880 had he met his followers in council. This was resented by the parliamentary contingent; and as prorogation approached, dissatisfaction increased, and the demand for a caucus became irresistible. Mr. Mackenzie, however, was inexorable; and when at length a caucus was called for April 29th, the invitations were issued by the Liberal whip without the sanction of the party leader. On the eve of this meeting Mr. Mackenzie

¹ "Mr. Blake's title to his place therefore is necessity; to talk of intrigue is senseless."—*The Bystander*, April, 1881, page 172.

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announced his resignation in Parliament. It is significant that he did not make his communication to caucus. As leader of the Opposition he had no official status in the House of Commons. It is even more significant that his statement to Parliament was the first intimation his Liberal associates received that he had determined to withdraw from the leadership. For many years his relations with Mr. Blake were not entirely cordial, and there is no doubt he was firmly persuaded that in office he had received from Mr. Blake only a hesitating and intermittent support. There is on record a letter written by Mr. Mackenzie some months before the fall of his Government, in which he said: "From the first I was more willing to serve than to reign, and would even now be gladly relieved from a position the toils of which no man can appreciate who has not had the experience. I pressed Mr. Blake in November, 1874, to take the lead, and last winter I again urged him to do so, and this summer I offered to go out altogether, or serve under him, as he might deem best in the general interest."¹ But though Mr. Blake would not accept the leadership in 1874, nor the office of Prime Minister, in Mr. Mackenzie's stead, in 1877, he now accepted the appointment from the party caucus which met on the morning after Mr. Mackenzie announced his resignation in Parlia-

¹ The Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, His Life and Times, by William Buckingham and the Hon. Geo. W. Ross, page 502.

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ment. It may be that Mr. Mackenzie was convinced that the question of the leadership would arise in the caucus, and that as differences of opinion would surely develop, his resignation would subserve his own independence and dignity, and leave the caucus free to make its decision. It is certain, however, that he did not recognize his own increasing physical infirmity, and was not at the moment favourable to Mr. Blake's appointment to the party leadership. In fact, from the moment that he announced his resignation in Parliament until the day of his death, Mr. Mackenzie never entered a Liberal caucus. It is also the fact that then and ever afterward he was unfitted by physical weakness for severe or sustained political effort.

Mr. Blake's position was one of exceeding delicacy and difficulty. It was impossible for Mr. Mackenzie to resume the leadership, and under all the circumstances it was hard for Mr. Blake to accept the office. But the caucus was absolutely unanimous for Mr. Blake; the temper and interests of the party seemed to demand his acceptance; and at length he sacrificed his personal judgment, faced certain misunderstanding and misrepresentation, and took upon his shoulders the leadership of a remnant in the House of Commons, and a broken party in the country.

It was not Mr. Blake's fortune to lead the Liberal party back to office; but no one who examines the record will deny that he profoundly

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influenced the deliberations of Parliament, and contributed greatly to the maintenance of a sane opinion and a sound moral temper in the country. Mr. Blake has the mind and the genius of a great administrator. It may be that he is not so well equipped for the part of a leader in Opposition. In truth it seems an ill caprice of fortune which set this managing and governing mind to a long warfare in Opposition in Canada, and to a far less hopeful struggle for a weak and unpopular cause in the Imperial Parliament. It is doubtful if this continent has bred a more opulent mind than that of Edward Blake. He ranks with Webster and Hamilton and Beecher. His very first appearances in the courts gave the impression of great intellectual power and of phenomenal industry. His brief term of office in Ontario revealed political talent and administrative capacity of the first order. Throughout the stormy days of the Pacific scandal his voice rang through the country, and his stern arraignment of Sir John Macdonald in the great debate which closed with the Conservative leader's resignation of office in November, 1873, is one of the most overwhelming speeches ever delivered in the Canadian Parliament. That and many of his later speeches would take high rank in any Parliament in the world.

Mr. Blake held office in the Mackenzie Administration, and under his direction important steps were taken in the assertion of the self-governing rights of Canada. His was the measure which

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demanding for the Canadian Parliament the authority to pass upon the legislation of the Home Government respecting the extradition of criminals in so far as such legislation affected Canada. He successfully asserted the right of Canada to make independent extradition arrangements with the United States. Through negotiation with the Colonial Office he secured a revision of the instructions to the Governor-General, by which that Imperial officer was shorn of independent authority and made the obedient mouthpiece of the Canadian Ministry on all questions other than those of Imperial concern. The Mackenzie Government, in negotiating the Brown Reciprocity Treaty and in the Fisheries Arbitration, had persuaded the Home authorities to give Canada direct representation on the Imperial Commissions. Later, as leader of the Opposition, Mr. Blake contended for the right of Canada to negotiate her own commercial treaties. In fact, the assertion of the full self-governing power of Canada was the dominant note of Mr. Blake's work as a federal Minister and as leader of the Liberal party, and it is interesting to speculate how the relations between Canada and the Mother Country would have developed if he had become the head of a Canadian Cabinet. He is a Federalist rather than an Imperialist, and in any plan of federation he would very clearly assert the positive political equality of the colonies. Not once during the years that he has sat in the Imperial Parliament has he broken silence

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with the language of Imperialism. If he touches such questions at all, it is to suggest the theory of autonomous kingdoms for Ireland and the colonies rather than a great central Parliament vested with authority over the widely-separated parts of the far-spreading British Empire.

Mr. Blake was in poor health, and so was not at his best during the term of the Mackenzie Government. He seemed to lack heartiness for his work and to be sparing of his public services. In 1873, he joined the Cabinet as Minister without portfolio; he withdrew from the Government in 1874, he became Minister of Justice in 1875, resigned that office in September, 1877, to accept the Presidency of the Council, and early in 1878, again withdrew from the Cabinet. With his subsequent election to the Liberal leadership began his great struggle with Sir John Macdonald for the first place in the confidence of the people of Canada. History must condemn the redistribution measure of 1882, but even under more equal conditions Sir John Macdonald would have won that election. Business was good in older Canada, the North-West was passing through a remarkable period of inflation and speculation, and all over the country protection seemed justified of its works. A great expansion of manufacturing industry and an abounding commercial and industrial prosperity united the staple interests of the country in support of the new fiscal policy, and in the face of these conditions Sir John Mac-

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donald was invincible. But the mass of Liberals had an exuberant faith in Mr. Blake, and they learned with something like a shock that he had not summarily unhorsed Sir John Macdonald in the Dominion as he had summarily overthrown John Sandfield Macdonald in Ontario. It was unfortunate for Mr. Blake that more was expected of him than mortal man could hope to achieve.

Mr. Blake's failure in 1887 was due to the strenuous hostility of the protectionist manufacturers, to lavish promises of public works by the Administration, and to the deep feeling excited by the North-West Rebellion. The protectionists were determined to keep the tariff in the hands of Sir John Macdonald, and even many manufacturers who still maintained a nervous connection with the Liberal party, were profoundly uneasy at the prospect of revolutionary tariff changes. Mr. Blake's own utterances gave slight ground for apprehension. But it may be admitted in justice to the excited protectionists, that some of his parliamentary supporters and many of the Liberal journals maintained an attitude of stern and uncompromising hostility to the whole protectionist system, and persistently denounced the extremist protectionist features of the existing tariff. This gave the protected manufacturers their ground of quarrel with Mr. Blake, and closed the ears of a very powerful element in the community to all appeal and all argument upon other vital questions of public

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concern. Mr. Blake's own position on the tariff is clearly expressed in his address to the electors of West Durham in 1882. He then said: "You know well that I do not approve of needless restrictions on our liberty of exchanging what we have for what we want, and do not see that any substantial application of the restrictive principle has been, or can be, made in favour of the great interests of the mechanic, the labourer, the farmer, the lumberman, the shipbuilder, or the fisherman. But you know also that I have fully recognized the fact that we are obliged to raise yearly a great sum, made greater by the obligations imposed on us by this Government; and that we must continue to provide this yearly sum mainly by import duties, laid to a large extent on goods similar to those which can be manufactured here; and that it results as a necessary incident of our settled fiscal system that there must be a large, and as I believe, in the view of moderate protectionists, an ample advantage to the home manufacturer. Our adversaries wish to present to you an issue as between the present tariff and absolute free trade. That is not the true issue. Free trade is, as I have repeatedly explained, for us impossible; and the issue is whether the present tariff is perfect, or defective and unjust."

Early in the campaign of 1887, he repeated this declaration of policy, and professed, doubtless upon adequate authority, to speak also for Sir Richard Cartwright. In fact, it is understood that he spoke

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after full consultation with the chief men of the party, and voiced the reasoned and deliberate judgment of himself and his parliamentary associates. He said: "No man, I care not how convinced an advocate of absolute free trade for Canada he may be, has yet suggested, no man I believe can suggest, a practicable plan whereby our great revenue needs can be met, otherwise than by the continued imposition of very high duties on goods similar to those we make, or can make, within our bounds, or on the raw material. I invite the most ardent free trader in public life to present a plausible solution of this problem, and I contend that he is bound to do so before he talks of free trade as practicable in Canada. I have not believed it soluble in my day, and any chance of its solubility, if any chance there were, has been destroyed by the vast increase of our yearly charge, and by the other conditions which have been created. The thing is removed from the domain of practical politics."¹

But the organized protectionists could not be conciliated. They fought as desperately for Sir John Macdonald as in 1882, and their influence in many constituencies was decisive. Then the Government's faulty, feeble and even corrupt administration of the affairs of the North-West was enmeshed in the execution of Riel and the Nationalist agitation in Quebec. In the general estimation of the English

¹ From a speech by Mr. Blake at Malvern in East York, January 22nd, 1887.

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provinces, Riel was a plotter, an adventurer, if not a murderer, and behind his turbulent figure stood the martyred Scott. The inflammatory utterances of Quebec Nationalists fed the fires of racial bigotry in Ontario. In consequence, the enthusiasm of many thousands of Liberals was checked, and probably many votes that Mr. Blake would have received under other circumstances, were not polled or were given to Conservative candidates.

But though Mr. Blake fought in the teeth of public sentiment, he fought magnificently. There is nothing in the political literature of Canada, if we except his own speeches against the bargain with the Canadian Pacific Syndicate, equal to his great series of addresses in Parliament and in the country on the execution of Riel and the mismanagement of North-West affairs by the Macdonald Government. His voice was heard in every constituency in Ontario, and at many points in Quebec; but while he forced a sullen recognition of his great powers from the most venomous and inveterate of opponents, he could not overcome the prejudice and sentiment of the country. Then the Liberal treasury was empty. There was no party fund even for legitimate expenses, while his adversaries, as later events have shown, distributed an enormous campaign fund throughout the country. Besides, Mr. Blake had strongly antagonized the Orange Association, a great political force in Canada, and its lodges, naturally enough, laboured with untiring

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zeal to accomplish his defeat; while his strong and eloquent championship of the cause of Catholic Ireland brought no corresponding political advantage. It may be doubted if home rule for Ireland is a legitimate issue in the affairs of Canada; but there can be no doubt that Mr. Blake, by devoting his time, fortune, and intellect to that cause, has proved his sincere attachment to the movement for Irish self-government.

Mr. Blake felt this second defeat keenly, and towards the close of the parliamentary session of 1887, with energy exhausted and health impaired, resigned the leadership of the Liberal party, and at the general election of 1891 did not seek re-election to the Canadian Parliament. A year later he accepted a seat in the Imperial Parliament as the Irish member for South Longford.

Now and then one may hear the shallow remark that Mr. Blake was a failure in Canada. The truth is that on almost every great question of public policy time has justified his position. On land policy and railway policy he saw beyond his time, and the future holds for him a still ampler vindication. In his gospel of generous dealing with French and Catholic he was a patriot and a prophet. In his Spartan integrity he gave us a noble example of the best type of British statesmanship. He was austere. We thought him cold. We felt in Sir John Macdonald the kinship of a common humanity. Mr. Blake seemed to be always "on the

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side of the angels." Smaller men felt sometimes that his imperious mind betrayed itself in intellectual impatience, if not in intellectual arrogance. We knew that he had Gladstone's moral elevation, but were not so sure that he had Gladstone's moral enthusiasm. We did not understand that in the one the enthusiasm was displayed, in the other concealed. A master of parliamentary strategy and a very giant in political combat, he still could not get so close to the people as his great rival. He could not make a worshipper here by a shrug of the shoulders, there by a shake of the hand, yonder by a skilful word that would penetrate to the very core of a man's self-esteem. As ambitious as Sir John Macdonald, he did not seem to confess it so frankly, and many a time his towering ability was checked by the simple manifestation of Sir John Macdonald's humanity.

As a speaker Mr. Blake has remarkable force and fluency. He is, perhaps, too exhaustive, and prone to over-preparation and over-elaboration. He cannot overlook a point or abridge any branch of an argument, and the characteristics which mark his work before the courts also distinguish his addresses to Parliament and from the platform. It was said that as leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons he left nothing to his lieutenants, and that he undertook the condensation and presentation of a mass of detail that could have been safely committed to other hands. There is

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point in the criticism. This is something which must be learned by the leaders in every field, and if Mr. Blake had been able to distribute the work and responsibilities of the leadership, he would have borne better the physical strain of his political labours. Then, he seemed to speak under a sense of restraint, and with a check-rein upon his emotions. He has a keen and searching wit, at times a thoroughly happy humour, but he used it sparingly. He has a remarkable power to rouse men and send their blood leaping and plunging, but as a rule he confined himself to calm, restrained, deliberate argument. He persuaded to conviction rather than stimulated to enthusiasm. He seemed determined to win men by their reason and to spare their emotions, to show always the temper of the statesman and never that of the agitator. This was admirable, but sometimes it was not politics.

Once, at least, in the House of Commons he slipped the rein, and the incident has never been forgotten. During the memorable struggle over the Franchise bill, the House had sat without rising from three o'clock on Thursday until midnight on Saturday. The Government knew that Mr. Blake would not speak for even five minutes into Sunday morning, and it was determined that he should not be allowed to close the debate. Mr. Foster spoke at length, and was followed by Sir John Macdonald who held the floor until five minutes to twelve o'clock, and then sat down,

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amid the cheering of the delighted Ministerialists. But Mr. Blake jumped to his feet and filled the five minutes at his command with fiery eloquence and swift denunciation of the tactics of the Government, crowded columns into sentences, gave himself utterly to the fervour of the moment, and at the stroke of twelve dropped into his seat amid such a tempest of cheering and enthusiasm as Parliament has rarely witnessed.¹ It was a wonderful performance, and it was a rare delight to see this great, calm, pitiless logician quite abandoned to human passions and emotions. It was seldom that we saw him thus. The picture we know best is that of a man of giant frame and serious aspect, towering and impressive, facing a great meeting, pouring out a stream of severe, classic English, broken into sentences of many parts and of curious complexity, but never obscure or incomplete, driving home his argument, piling proof upon proof and fact upon fact, now rising into noble eloquence, now stern with reproof, now big with counsel and prophecy, seeming always to stand as one discharging a solemn responsibility and holding to as solemn account the people who must determine the issue of the contest.²

¹ Hansard, May 2nd, 1885, pages 1564, 1565.

² "Mr. Blake, were he a man of ordinary force, would hardly deserve the name of an orator. The greatest, the most essential gift for an orator is force, and this he has in the highest degree. . . . Mr. Blake's intellect is strong, well equipped, quick. His mastery of facts is astonishing. He is hardly so successful when he deals with figures.

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Mr. Blake's eminence in Canada was undisputed, and although an Irish member and a colonist, both disadvantages at Westminster, he has won his way to an honourable position in the Imperial Parliament. His was the determining voice that made Oliver Mowat Prime Minister of Ontario, and Wilfrid Laurier leader of the Liberal party of Canada. In each case his judgment was triumphantly vindicated.¹

Formidable as was the man whom Mr. Laurier succeeded as leader of the Opposition, not less formidable was the man whom he confronted as leader of the Government. Sir John Macdonald was then serving his fourth term as Prime Minister, and for more than thirty years he had sat in either the Parliament of United Canada or the federal House of Commons. He had great faults and great qualities. His faults had their chief manifestation in his election methods, while his greater qualities had their best expression in his wide national outlook, in his sympathetic management of diverse racial and

His command of language leaves little to be desired for immediate effectiveness. But there is a total absence of literary tissue in his speeches, and there being nothing to relieve the excellent monotony, they are not easy reading—and how speeches will read has become an important question in modern times.”—Nicholas Flood Davin in the *Canadian Monthly* for March, 1881.

¹ Parts of this study of the Hon. Edward Blake appeared in the *Canadian Magazine* for November, 1897, in an article entitled “Premiers of Ontario since Confederation” and are now incorporated in these volumes with the permission of the editor, Mr. John A. Cooper.

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sectarian elements, and in his judicious recognition of popular sympathies and even of national prejudices as agencies for the consolidation of the Dominion. There is no doubt that he loved power for its own sake. It was possibly his deliberate conviction that his ideals of policy and methods of administration were essential to the progress and stability of the country. Sir Hugh Allan's enormous contributions to the Conservative campaign fund in 1872, and the heavy assessments made upon public contractors in order to meet the financial necessities of the campaign of 1887, furnish startling evidence of the extent to which direct bribery was practised in behalf of Conservative candidates, and of the strength of Sir John Macdonald's determination to maintain at all costs his political ascendancy.¹ Unfortunately, it cannot be shown that the record of the Liberal party was spotless; and while we know that Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Blake discouraged the use of improper influences in elections, many Liberal candidates did not shrink from illegal expenditures, and occasional judicial exposures of Liberal

¹ Sir Hugh Allan's contributions to the Conservative campaign fund in 1872 exceeded \$350,000. It was shown by documents published by the *Toronto Globe* and afterwards made the ground of charges against Conservative Ministers, that in 1887 over \$100,000 drawn from public contractors and from persons interested in railway subsidies, were distributed in twenty-two constituencies in the Quebec district. It was established by investigation into the charges made by Mr. Tarte in 1891 against Sir Hector Langevin and Mr. Thos. McGreevy, M.P. for Quebec West, that \$119,000 were contributed by one firm of contractors to the election expenses of Ministers and their candidates.

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corruption materially weakened the attack upon the electoral methods of Sir John Macdonald and his associates. In truth, electoral bribery seems to be ingrained in American institutions, if not in democratic institutions the world over, and with every extension of the franchise the area of corruption widens. Bribery of the individual voter, bribery of constituencies by promises of railways and public buildings, and bribery of provinces by timely rearrangements of the financial terms of Confederation all obtained under the régime of Sir John Macdonald; and if he did not originate, he at least did something to perpetuate and establish, these deep-seated evils in our politics. A still sterner judgment must be passed upon the Redistribution Act of 1882, and the Franchise Act of 1885. These were bold and direct attempts to use the power of a parliamentary majority to stifle public opinion and destroy freedom of elections, and stand in direct conflict with his earlier and higher ideals. He took advantage of the violence of political controversy, and the fear of the manufacturing and financial interests that the protectionist system would be prematurely disturbed, to pass legislation that would not have been tolerated under freer and saner conditions of opinion, and which fatally handicapped the Liberal leaders in successive general elections.

Sir John Macdonald was neither a popular orator nor a parliamentary debater of the first order.¹ He

¹ "Sir John Macdonald is a type of politician which has never failed

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was, however, a profound student of character. He had humour, adaptiveness, and readiness. He could break the force of an attack with a story or an epigram. He had that mysterious quality of personal magnetism which gives to its fortunate possessors a strange and mighty power over their kind. During the last four or five years of his life, his seat in Parliament was often vacant. He nursed his strength and avoided so far as possible the worry and fatigue of late night sittings. It was his habit to sit with

to delight the English people—the man who, like Palmerston, can work hard, do strong things, hold his purpose, never lose sight for a moment of the honour and welfare of his country, and yet crack his joke and have his laugh, full of courage and good spirits and kindly fun. . . Sir John Macdonald in the English House of Commons would have been equal, in my opinion, to Mr. Disraeli in finesse, in the art of forming combinations and managing men. He never could have equalled him in invective, or in epigram, or in force as an orator. Sir John Macdonald brings up his artillery with more ease. He is always human, even in his attacks. Lord Beaconsfield, as Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons, approached his opponent like some serpentine monster, coiled himself ruthlessly round him, fascinated with his gaze, and struck out with venomous fang. But Sir John is probably the better debater of the two. His delivery is lively, natural, mercurial; Lord Beaconsfield's is laboured. The power of making a statement is not the forte of the author of "Endymion." Sir John Macdonald makes a luminous statement, and his reasoning faculty is at least as high as Lord Beaconsfield's. He has very little, comparatively, of the latter's *curiosa felicitas* in coining phrases, but his humour is more spontaneous. Lord Beaconsfield has the charm which is inseparable from genius, but it may well be doubted if his power of conciliating men and fixing their affections surpasses that of the Prime Minister of the Dominion. I am sure that in sober strong sense the balance is in favour of the Canadian statesman. There is nothing viewy about Sir John Macdonald. Though a man of imagination, reason is lord every time."—Nicholas Flood Davin, in the *Canadian Monthly* for March, 1881.

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his legs crossed and his head thrown back, with a jaunty air and an alert look, except now and then when some keen debater across the floor was pressing him hard, dealing square, strong blows at "the old man and the old policy," with perhaps a touch of bitterness in the words, and a keen knowledge of the old man's ways revealed in the method of attack. At such times he would move uneasily as the enemy pressed him close, toss his head, bite his lips, glance angrily back upon his followers, throw some taunt to his opponents, and at last come to his feet and retort upon the adversary. In later years he rarely lost his complete self-control. In his angriest mood he was deliberate, and seemed as he faced his opponents to be coolly and craftily seeking for the weak spots in the indictment. He did not always meet argument with argument. He had little eloquence. He had no loftiness of speech. He never sought to cover the whole ground of an opponent's attack. That elaboration of argument and exhaustive mastery of detail which distinguished the speeches of Mr. Blake is generally lacking in the speeches of Sir John Macdonald. In Parliament he rarely spoke to convince or win the Opposition. His aim there was to touch the party loyalty and rouse the party enthusiasm of his supporters. He would often turn his back upon the Liberals and address himself directly to the Ministerialists. He would strike some happy thought, some sentence full of keen sarcasm or genial ridicule, and with a shrewd look and

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smiling face and jaunty air, would drop the sentence with a shrug of the shoulders and a half-contemptuous gesture that always tickled his followers, and often exasperated his opponents. There he would stand with his back to the Speaker, while the Opposition chafed at the cool but skilful exaggeration of their position, and the Conservatives cheered with delight, and wagged their heads and shrugged their shoulders in sympathy with the old man's bantering humour.

He would pass one of Mr. Blake's most powerful arraignments of his policy with a shrug and a story that perhaps had grown old in his service. He would meet one of Sir Richard Cartwright's most scathing exposures of the tendencies and results of his rule and methods with a smile for his followers and a jocular reminder for his opponents that the country had heard these arguments, and he was still in office. His relations with Mr. Laurier were always cordial. He seemed to appreciate the courtesy of the brilliant young Liberal leader, as he respected the firmness with which he stood upon his rights, and the tenacity with which he held to his programme. With Mr. Mills he had most cordial relations, and yet no man could more readily disturb his equanimity and touch his temper. Mr. Mills' courage, his pertinacity, his baffling questions, his calculated, persistent, roundabout methods of getting at the truth sometimes greatly aggravated the Conservative leader. He hated to be forced into

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a corner. He hated to make any confession or to be driven from any position. Mr. Davies, too, when he came out from behind his desk and flung his keen and vigorous eloquence into the face of the First Minister, often stirred his anger and sometimes roused his resentment. Mr. Lister could likewise move him out of his usual smiling humour; and though Mr. Paterson did not often drive the old man to anger, he was one of the few Liberals who could reach his political conscience.

Sir John Macdonald was fond of applause. He delighted in a bit of flattery from an opponent. He knew, as few men have known, how to use the social influence to political advantage. The man who came to Parliament with unsettled opinions, who wanted social notice, who wanted something for his constituency, was likely soon to find himself at the wheels of the old man's chariot. The young member was always noticed. The waverer was strengthened, and the wounded were healed. His appeals to party loyalty were always effective. His followers never failed to laugh when he joked. They always cheered his appeals. They always warmed into enthusiasm when he pointed to his majority in the House and in the country, and to the record of his achievements. The Conservatives in Parliament and in the constituencies loved Sir John Macdonald, and few men who had ever followed him could withstand his personal appeal. He had won great victories for his party, he had

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led them to triumph again and again, and they were grateful and loyal to the end, and mourned for him as for one taken out from their very households.¹ Many Liberals, too, while they quarreled with his methods and were uncompromisingly hostile to his whole system of government, rather liked his cheerful audacity, and were not quite without a feeling of admiration for his strong and

¹ "Sir John had a wonderful influence over many men. They would go through fire and water to serve him, did serve him, and got, some of them, little or no reward. But they served him because they loved him, and because with all his great powers they saw in him their own frailties. He abounded in the right kind of charity. And speaking of the love his friends and followers had for him, Mr. Pope dwells on the "old guard" and the old loyalty to the chief. So it was, but there were dark days also, when even those who afterwards enrolled themselves in the guard, passed by on the other side. If ever there was a man in low water, it was Sir John as I saw him one day in the winter of 1875, coming out of the House into the bitter air, dressed in an old Red River sash and coat, and the old historic mink-skin cap, tottering down the hill to the eastern gateway alone, others passing him with a wide sweep. The lesson of Sir John's life is that he pulled himself out of those days and trials into higher and more solid footing. But Sir John's real "old guard" were not the men who stood with him at Ottawa, but the greater old guard who stood and fought for him in every township, year after year, and to whom a call by name or a nod of the head was all the recompense they got and yet the recompense they most prized. Sir John has been praised for his statesmanship, and for this I, too, give him all praise. But his statesmanship was limited to two things: carrying on the Government when no one else could do it, and do it so well and so continuously, and forging the country together. He originated no great principle. He appropriated, however, freely from others when an opportunity offered, or when he thought another's idea would lead to or keep him in office."—Mr. W. F. Maclean, M.P., in a sketch of Sir John Macdonald entitled "The Canadian Themistocles," in the *Canadian Magazine*, January, 1895

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picturesque personality. He knew men to the core, and he could play upon their passions and prejudices as the master player upon the instrument that he loves. He was fertile in expedients, bold in the use of means, a master at the board by his very fondness for the great game he played. He was a favourite with journalists. He deemed no man beneath his notice. He never forgot that popularity was power. It may be that he was a supreme opportunist in face of forces which he could not control, or which he desired to control for his own political purposes. But in this sense Gladstone and Peel and even Cromwell were opportunists. It is only those whom Stevenson would call the "faithful failures" of politics that are willing to go down into history as the champions of lost causes, and to forego temporary advantage in hope of reaction or in expectation of the applause of posterity.

But Sir John Macdonald was more than an opportunist. He had clear and definite ideals. He could face a popular clamour with signal courage. He seldom forgot that in order to promote the true interests of the Confederation it was essential to maintain good relations between the two races which comprise the bulk of the Canadian population, to resist the destructive tendencies of racialism, to respect even the prejudices of minorities, and to maintain loyally the guarantees of the Constitution. It is true that he often profited

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by racial and sectarian movements, but he was always their master, or at least seldom their servant, and in the end he moderated the temper, or baffled the purposes of the extremists. It was here that he did his best work, and his example of patient conciliation and resolute toleration was of inestimable value to the country in its formative period and must stand always as a beacon light to Canadian statesmen. He was jealous for the dignity of Parliament, for the integrity of the Bench, for the commercial credit of the country, for the legislative independence and self-governing rights of Canada. We have, in Mr. Pope's story of the negotiation of the treaty of Washington, striking evidence of his correct appreciation of the duty of a Canadian statesman under difficult circumstances. Devoted as he was to British connection, and zealous as he was to strengthen the bonds of affection which unite Canada to Great Britain, he did not forget that he was primarily and particularly the custodian of the rights of Canada, and no man could have done more to prevent sacrifice of Canadian interests by the British commissioners in order to conciliate American opinion. Perhaps there was after all a partial sacrifice of Canadian interests on that occasion, but we know now that Sir John Macdonald was not at fault, and in fact all his public life was marked by scrupulous concern for the rights of Canada in international negotiations, as well as for a sympathetic but

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reasoned and practical conception of Canada's relations to the Empire.

He was very human, conscious of his faults, happy in his successes and achievements, and upon the whole, patient under attacks as savage and persistent as ever fell to the lot of any public man in Canada. These attacks were sometimes so violent and so bitter that they failed of their purpose, and possibly created a measure of sympathy for the Conservative leader. At any rate, in his later years he became very strongly entrenched in the hearts of his countrymen, and as the mists fall away, and partisan rage softens, and prejudices disappear, we shall perhaps forget that in the pursuit of power he was often unfair and sometimes even unscrupulous and desperate, and remember only that the completed work of the statesman becomes the common possession of the whole people. Sir John Macdonald must forever stand as one of the most consummate party leaders in British history, and one of the most picturesque and impressive figures among the statesmen of the Empire.

While Sir John Macdonald lay dead at Earnscliffe, and the country's grief was at its keenest, and all party differences were forgotten in the common sorrow, Mr. Laurier pronounced a remarkable eulogy upon his great rival. He said that in many respects Sir John Macdonald was Canada's greatest son, and in every sense Canada's foremost citizen and

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statesman. "I think it can be asserted that, for the supreme art of governing men, Sir John Macdonald was gifted as few men in any land or in any age were gifted—gifted with qualities which would have made him famous wherever exercised, and which would have shown all the more conspicuously the larger the theatre. The fact that he could congregate together elements the most heterogeneous and blend them into one compact party, and to the end of his life keep them steadily under his hand, is perhaps altogether unprecedented. The fact that during all those years he retained unimpaired, not only the confidence, but the devotion—the ardent devotion and affection of his party—is evidence that besides those higher qualities of statesmanship to which we were the daily witnesses, he was also endowed with those inner, subtle, undefinable graces of soul which win and keep the hearts of men. . . . He was fond of power and he never made any secret of it. Many times we have heard him avow it on the floor of this Parliament, and his ambition in this respect was gratified as perhaps no other man's ambition ever was. In my judgment even the career of William Pitt can hardly compare with that of Sir John Macdonald in this respect; for although William Pitt, moving in a higher sphere had to deal with problems greater than our problems, yet I doubt if in the intricate management of a party William Pitt had to contend with difficulties equal to those that

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Sir John Macdonald had to contend with." His statesmanship, Mr. Laurier declared, was written in the history of Canada. "It may be said, without any exaggeration whatever, that the life of Sir John Macdonald from the date he entered Parliament is the history of Canada, for he was connected and associated with all the events, all the facts which brought Canada from the position it then occupied—the position of two small provinces, having nothing in common but their common allegiance, united by a bond of paper and united by nothing else—to the present state of development which Canada has reached. Although my political views compel me to say that, in my judgment, his actions were not always the best that could have been taken in the interest of Canada, although my conscience compels me to say that of late he has imputed to his opponents motives which I must say in my heart he has misconceived,¹ yet I am only too glad here to sink these differences and to remember only the great services he has performed for our country—to remember that his actions always displayed great originality of view, unbounded fertility of resource, a high level of intellectual conception, and above all a far-reaching vision beyond the event of the day, and still higher, permeating the whole, a broad patriotism,—a

¹ This is a reference to the charges of "veiled treason" and disloyalty to British connection made against the Liberal party during the electoral canvas of 1891.

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devotion to Canada's welfare, Canada's advancement, and Canada's glory."¹ It will probably be found that this speech correctly indicates the final judgment of history upon the career and character of Sir John Macdonald. It was this man, thrice bedded in the affections of the people, still in physical vigour, and in plenitude of intellectual power, whom Mr. Laurier faced when he took his seat to the left of the Speaker as leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons.

¹ Hansard, June 8th, 1891.

CHAPTER XVIII

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

A FEW weeks after the general election which took place on February 22nd, 1887, Mr. Blake addressed a private letter to the Liberal members of the new Parliament in which he intimated that when the House met he would require to have the question of the leadership considered by a party caucus. The letter did not amount to a positive resignation of the office, but was so worded as to bear that interpretation, and was so interpreted by the Conservative journals. The communication, of course, was not intended for the public, but a copy fell into unfriendly hands, and its publication on the eve of the meeting of Parliament was a cause of confusion and damage to the Liberal party. Some at least of the Conservative "bolters" of Quebec—now safely seated for another Parliament, and very conscious of the fact that power and patronage still reposed in the hands of Sir John Macdonald, were eager to fall back on the commissariat, and the contemplated withdrawal of Mr. Blake from the Liberal leadership was just the excuse that was needed. It is likely that the Liberal party would have stood stronger in the earlier divisions of the

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session, and that the alliances produced by Mr. Blake's North-West policy would have proved more enduring if it had not been so well understood that his resignation was impending, and so generally recognized that his successor, however popular and gifted, could not at once command all Mr. Blake's support in the House or in the country. Selection by a parliamentary caucus is but the first step in the making of a party leader. He has still to impress his personality upon the country and make his way into the heart and confidence of the people. This is the slow growth of years, even in the case of such men as Sir John Macdonald and Mr. Laurier, and there can never be certainty that even the finest parliamentary figure will become a successful popular leader. For sheer intellectual power, Mr. Blake and Sir John Thompson have had few peers in the Canadian Parliament. Neither had those rare gifts of popular leadership which belonged to Sir John Macdonald, and which are probably possessed in equal degree by Mr. Laurier. Hence, a change of political leaders is always an experiment, and no purely parliamentary reputation gives at once that authority which intercourse with the people and actual exercise of leadership finally confer.

It is easily understood, therefore, that the rumours of Mr. Blake's retirement had an ominous sound in the ears of Liberals, and greatly affected the spirit of the party in Parliament and in the

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country. The House met in April, and at the first Liberal caucus of the session, Mr. Blake was formally re-elected as leader of the Opposition. It was announced that he had accepted, but closely as the secrets of caucus are guarded, it is now known that the report was not quite accurate. It is safe to say that he was subjected to tremendous pressure, and found it almost impossible to secure an immediate acceptance of his resignation. But he gave no pledge to continue, and from that moment it was well understood that before the close of the session his successor must be appointed. Mr. Blake's health was bad, he was worn down by insomnia, and quite unequal to the long night sittings of the Commons and the arduous labours of leadership. He was so constituted that so long as he held the leadership he could not shirk the onerous duties and responsibilities of the position, and naturally as the session proceeded his health grew worse and his determination to resign more fixed and irrevocable. Finally on June 2nd he met his party in caucus and definitely and absolutely resigned the leadership. What to do then was a serious problem for the Opposition. There was no common opinion as to who should succeed, and this, no doubt, because few had then thought that it was possible to put a French Canadian Catholic at the head of a political party in Canada. For the moment, caucus appointed a small advisory committee to

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manage the affairs and direct the policy of the party. This committee comprised Sir Richard Cartwright and the Hon. David Mills for Ontario, Mr. Laurier and the Hon. François Langelier for Quebec, the Hon. Charles Weldon for New Brunswick, the Hon. A. G. Jones for Nova Scotia, the Hon. I. H. Davies for Prince Edward Island, and Mr. Robert Watson for Manitoba. This was, of course, a temporary expedient, ineffective for parliamentary purposes, and impossible during the recess. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle." It was necessary to agree upon a leader. At least three names were seriously canvassed for the appointment. These were Sir Richard Cartwright, Mr. Laurier, and Mr. Mills. All three had great qualifications, and all three had warm supporters in the Liberal parliamentary party. Mr. Blake, who probably knew Mr. Laurier better than any other man in Parliament, thought the interests of the party would be best served by his appointment to the leadership. The knowledge of Mr. Blake's preference probably determined the action of the caucus which met on June 7th to choose his successor. Mr. Laurier's nomination was made by Sir Richard Cartwright and seconded by Mr. Mills and unanimously ratified.

It was represented in the press reports next morning that Mr. Laurier had received only a temporary appointment, and that, in fact, his tenure

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of the leadership was conditional upon Mr. Blake's restoration to health and return to his place in Parliament. In its issue of June 8th, the *Toronto Globe* said: "Our advices at a late hour do not fully warrant the opinion that the matter has been finally settled. It would appear that Mr. Laurier has been made responsible for at least the temporary discharge of the duties of chief spokesman, but to leave the business in such shape will be a grave error. The Liberals must face the situation squarely, and recognize practically that it would be unfair to Mr. Laurier to place the heavy burden on his shoulders without reposing in him all the privileges, freedom, and authority of the lead. His appointment would be as judicious and generally acceptable as any, but it would be an error to place him or any other man in the false position that would ensue from a failure to recognize that Mr. Blake's return to the lead is absolutely not to be looked for. It would be no less unfair to Mr. Blake to allow an impression to prevail in the country that the stricken chief can be expected to reassume, at peril of a total break-down, any of the responsibilities which he has been compelled to abandon. His friends are naturally reluctant to give up hope of his speedy return, but they must do so, not less for his sake than for the interests of their Parliamentary organization."

This was a correct statement of Mr. Blake's position, but the writer had not penetrated the

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secrets of caucus. Mr. Laurier was not asked to accept either a temporary or a conditional appointment. It was he that fought against the acceptance of the office, and despite the earnest persuasions and entreaties of his associates, would agree only to a temporary appointment and a partial acceptance of the authority and responsibility of leadership. He required that the advisory committee should continue, and insisted that he should not be put before the country as the leader of the party. He even pleaded that the action of caucus should be considered as strictly private, and that the fact of his nomination to the leadership should not be announced. It is no secret that he favoured the appointment of Sir Richard Cartwright, and could only regard the selection of himself for the office as a grave personal and political mistake. He pleaded and remonstrated with genuine emotion against the insistent determination of caucus to force his acceptance, and withheld his positive refusal only on condition that the final decision should be postponed until the close of the session, and that in the meantime he should serve only as the nominal parliamentary leader in Mr. Blake's absence.

In Mr. Laurier's judgment there were many powerful reasons why he should not accept the leadership of the Liberal party. He had never enjoyed robust health, his means were limited, and desire for the high place to which he was called had never entered within the scope of his

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ambition. He had now the companionship of books, the leisure of the student, means, far short of affluence, but ample for his scale of living, a position in Parliament which gave him all the influence he sought and all the authority he coveted. His ideal of happiness was that of Edmond Schérer,—“to work, to content oneself with little, to lose without bitterness, to grow old without regret.” He knew that the burden of leadership would tax his strength, exhaust his means, and consume his leisure, and upon all these grounds the decision of caucus was unwelcome. These, however, were personal considerations which could perhaps be set aside if it could be shown that his assumption of the direction and management of a national party was vital to the party’s interests and the country’s welfare. But he found it impossible to reach any such conclusion. He remembered that he was a Roman Catholic and a French Canadian, and he was profoundly convinced that his race and religion would be fatal barriers to the success of the Liberal party under his leadership. He remembered that he had antagonized powerful forces in his own province; and while he knew that the great mass of the people of the English communities could not be influenced by racial and sectarian considerations, he still feared that the proportion of the electorate subject to such appeals would always be strong enough to turn many constituencies against any political

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party which might venture to put a French Catholic from Quebec at its head. He remembered that the Liberal party had always found its chief source of strength in Ontario, and deemed it wise, therefore, that the leader should be chosen from Ontario, and should profess the Protestant faith and speak the English tongue as his native language. He remembered the old quarrels over the representation in the Parliament of united Canada, and the spectre of French domination which loomed across so many pages of Canadian history. He knew that even then Quebec was under suspicion in Ontario, and that the time was unpropitious for the elevation of a Quebec Liberal, identified with Mr. Blake's policy, to the leadership of a national party. This view indeed found expression in some influential organs of public opinion.

In commenting upon the report that Mr. Laurier had been asked to serve as leader for the session, the *Toronto Mail* of June 9th, said: "Mr. Laurier is an eloquent man, of unblemished personal character, and of a wide knowledge of our political history. It is felt, however, that at a time like the present, when great events are in the air, Ontario should have the commanding voice on the Opposition as well as on the Government benches. We pay three-fifths of the taxation; ours is the only province not begging better terms; we have by far the largest stake in the present and future; upon our shoulders the support of the whole edifice

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of Confederation is devolving more and more. There is another objection to Mr. Laurier. His abilities as a speaker in and out of Parliament, his kind and winning manner and his spotless reputation as an individual, are not, as has been said, in dispute. No one on the Opposition side, not even Mr. Blake, is much better equipped for the leadership as regards these valuable qualities. Unfortunately, he is identified in the public mind more than any other man with the Riel movement, which discredited the Opposition at the recent election." Notwithstanding all these unfavourable circumstances, Mr. Laurier so won upon the sympathy and confidence of his Liberal associates during the remaining weeks of the session, that he was at length forced to bow to the will of caucus and definitely accept the leadership. On the day of prorogation, June 23rd, 1887, he agreed that an announcement to this effect should be made, although he was still persuaded that the step was unwise, and gravely doubtful if the Liberals of the country would heartily accept the decision of the parliamentary party.¹

¹ Mr. Laurier, notwithstanding his undoubtedly sincere protest, was elected to the leadership upon the motion of Sir Richard Cartwright, seconded by Mr. Mills, and with the unanimous approval of the parliamentary Opposition. His acceptance of the responsibility was generous and chivalric in a high degree, as all know who are acquainted with certain family business of the Opposition, which we do not intend to discuss at this time. It remains to be seen whether he possesses, in addition to parliamentary eloquence of the first order and a character entirely stainless, the skill, the firmness, the grasp of procedure,

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It can hardly be wrong now to say that some of the Liberal members, while animated by feelings of the utmost good will to Mr. Laurier, doubted the success of the experiment, and shared his fears that a French Catholic could not successfully lead a political party in Canada. This apprehension extended to the country, and was strengthened by the events which surrounded and immediately succeeded his accession to the leadership. The fires of the Riel agitation were still smouldering when Mr. D'Alton McCarthy and his allies entered upon the campaign for the disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act, and for the abolition of French as an official language in the North-West Territories. Mr. Mercier became Premier of Quebec in 1886, and in the legislative session of 1888, put through the Assembly an Act for the settlement of the Jesuit Estates. In consequence of the suppression by the Pope of the Jesuit order in 1773, these estates fell to the Crown and were applied to the promotion of public instruction in the Province of Quebec. By the Act of Confederation they became vested in the provincial Government and subject to the control of the Legislature. All down the years the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church had claimed to be the natural and rightful beneficiaries of these estates. They contended that by the laws of Quebec as they existed under the the speedy decision, and the determination to lead, which are necessary to a leader.—Editorial in the *Toronto Globe*, February 22nd, 1888.

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French régime, property of this nature would have reverted to the bishops as the ordinaries of the various dioceses in which the property was situated. When the Jesuits became incorporated in the province by Mr. Mercier's Act of 1887, they likewise made a claim to the estates. These persistent claims prejudiced the position of the property, and seriously reduced its value as a provincial asset. It yielded a revenue of only 2 per cent. upon a valuation of \$1,200,000, and attempts at sale were rendered abortive by the intervention of the religious authorities.

On various occasions provincial Ministers had opened negotiations with the bishops, but until Mr. Mercier came into office no progress was made and the demands of the ecclesiastics remained unsatisfied. Mr. Mercier undertook to effect a settlement and there was something bold and thorough in the terms of his proposition. His Act authorized the payment of \$400,000 as compensation to the Jesuits in lieu of the lands of which they were possessed prior to the conquest, and of which they were deprived by confiscation. It was expressly provided that the sum granted as compensation should stand as a special deposit until the Pope could ratify the settlement, and determine how the money should be distributed. Subsequently, His Holiness divided the amount among the Jesuits, the archbishops, and bishops of the province, and Laval University, while, in conse-

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quence of the settlement, and in order to avoid injustice to the English population, the grant to Protestant schools in Quebec was increased by \$60,000. There were twelve Protestants in the Legislature but only two of these took open exception to this remarkable measure. Indeed, Mr. Mercier was able to say: "I thank the Protestant members for the moderation with which they have discussed this question. It is a good omen. The unanimity which now prevails is a proof that the different races of which our population is composed have lived in peace and harmony, and approach the most delicate questions with that spirit of conciliation which accomplishes wonders when it is properly directed." But peace and harmony and the spirit of conciliation soon gave way before one of the most bitter and intemperate agitations which even this country has ever witnessed.

Some of the chief journals of Ontario denounced the measure with vigour and passion, a group of influential members of the Commons, both Conservative and Liberal, united to demand disallowance of the Act by the federal Government, and eminent Protestant clergymen and laymen organized to influence opinion in the country. The motion for disallowance, which was moved in the House of Commons by Col. William E. O'Brien, of Muskoka, in a speech of great force and eloquence, declared that the power of disallowance was a prerogative essential to the national existence

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of the Dominion ; that it should be fearlessly used for the protection of the rights of a minority, for the preservation of the fundamental principles of the Constitution, and for safe-guarding the general interests of the people ; and that the passage of the Jesuit Estates Act was beyond the power of the Quebec Legislature, inasmuch as it endowed from public funds a religious organization, thereby violating the undoubted constitutional principle of the complete separation of Church and State and of the absolute equality of all denominations before the law, because it recognized the usurpation of a right by a foreign authority, His Holiness, the Pope of Rome, to claim that his consent was necessary to empower the provincial Legislature to dispose of the public domain, and because the endorsement of the Society of Jesus, an alien, secret, and politico-religious body, the expulsion of which from every Christian community wherein it has had a footing has been rendered necessary by its intolerant and mischievous intermeddling with the functions of civil government, is fraught with danger to the civil and religious liberties of the people of Canada.¹

The advocates of disallowance sought to prove the various propositions embodied in the resolution, and it thus became necessary to trace far back along the years the history of the Jesuit order, to revive memories of dark and sinister events, and

¹ Hansard, March 26th, 1839.

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fight over again the ruthless theological quarrels which had cursed mankind in other generations. "God gave the gospel," said Froude; "the father of lies invented theology." In Ontario the scope of the agitation was widened and made to touch some of the burning issues of provincial politics. At a convention held in Toronto in June, attended by 700 delegates, not only did the resolutions adopted denounce the Jesuits as "an alien association, hostile to free institutions;" characterize the Jesuits Estates Act as "a violation of the trust under which the said estates were transferred by the Crown to the provincial authorities for the purposes of education exclusively;" and call for united and persistent action to "guard against the political encroachments of ultramontaniam;" but it was also demanded that every citizen of Ontario should be entered on the assessment roll as *prima facie* a supporter of the public school system, and that English should be the language of instruction in all public schools in the province.

Still, the main object of the agitation was to secure the disallowance of Mr. Mercier's Act, and it was with that question that the federal Ministers, and Mr. Laurier as leader of the Liberal party were concerned. No one among the political leaders of the country stood out against the agitation more firmly and inflexibly than Mr. Laurier. As a federalist he could take no other position. The ostentatious recognition of the Pope in Mr. Mercier's

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Act was, perhaps, unwise and unnecessary, but the estates belonged to the province, and the Act of Settlement was within the competence of the Legislature. It was no small satisfaction to Mr. Laurier and the Liberal party that the Government was forced to abandon the policy of the federal veto and meet the advocates of disallowance with the arguments Liberals had always employed in resisting the attempts of the federal authority to override provincial legislation. The position of the Government was stated by Sir John Thompson, Minister of Justice, in answer to petitions asking for the disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act, in these words: "The subject matter of the Act is one of provincial concern only, having relation to a fiscal matter entirely within the control of the Legislature of Quebec."¹ This throughout the debate was the position of the Government, and practically the position of Parliament, for only thirteen votes were recorded in favour of Col. O'Brien's motion.² The soundness of the position is

¹ It is reported from Ottawa that an effort is being made to secure the disallowance of the Compensation Bill, which has just passed its third reading. Beyond question, however, the Quebec Legislature is well within its rights in passing that measure, as well as in passing the Jesuit Incorporation Act of last year.—*Toronto Mail*, July 5th, 1888.

² The thirteen members of the House who voted for the disallowance motion were: Barron of North Victoria, Bell of Addington, Charlton of North Norfolk, Cockburn of Centre Toronto, Denison of West Toronto, Macdonald of East Huron, McCarthy of North Simcoe, McNeill of North Bruce, O'Brien of Muskoka, Scriver of Huntingdon, Sutherland of North Oxford, Tyrwhitt of South Simcoe, and Wallace of West York.

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now generally recognized, and from this time dates also the disuse of the federal veto as a feature of Conservative policy.

Before Sir John Thompson entered Parliament, Mr. McCarthy was the chief constitutional adviser of Sir John Macdonald. He leaned like his chief to the aggrandizement of the federal authority. Sir John Thompson was a greater lawyer than either, perhaps as great a lawyer as ever sat in the House of Commons, and under his authority the Conservative party was led gradually but surely towards the adoption of sounder constitutional principles.

In the course of his speech in the House on Col. O'Brien's motion, Mr. Laurier said: "Ever since the year 1854 I charge against the Government and against the Conservative party that they have been able to retain power, almost without interruption, largely by pandering to the prejudices of the one province and the prejudices of the other province. In the good Catholic Province of Quebec, to which I belong, the party supporting the Administration have always represented themselves as the champions of the Roman Catholic cause. They have always denounced their opponents, the Liberals of French origin like myself, as men of dangerous doctrines and tendencies. They have always represented the Liberals of Ontario as men actuated in all their actions and inspirations by a hatred of everything French and Catholic. At the same time, in the good Protestant

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Province of Ontario the same party has always been held up to the front as the party of unbending and uncompromising Protestantism; and the Conservative press to-day represent honourable gentlemen on this side as basely pandering to the influence of the French people and of the Catholic persuasion."¹ It was natural under the circumstances, and in view of the continuous struggle of Quebec Liberals against clerical intimidation and coercion, that Mr. Laurier should make these observations, and natural that he should resent the attempt to put him before the country as an agent of the Jesuits for no other offence than faithful adherence to a traditional Liberal doctrine. For the time, however, his hold upon the Liberals of Ontario was lessened by this agitation, and he was conscious of the weakness of a Catholic leadership under such trying conditions. Besides, his record in Quebec was but imperfectly understood in Ontario, and his fitness for the Liberal leadership was not yet fully demonstrated. In the previous summer he had made a tour of the Muskoka Lakes, and had spoken at Oakville, Beaverton, Guelph, Mount Forest, and St. Thomas, and was received everywhere with cordial good will. But he was still a comparative stranger in the province, and had no personal hold upon the masses of the Liberal party. Hence, when it was proposed that he should come up to Toronto and defend his course on the Jesuit Es-

¹ Hansard, March 28th, 1889.

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tates Act, there was grave misgiving among many Liberals, and a general fear that only harm to the leader and to the party would result. He was strongly and generally advised not to make the experiment. It was represented that he should leave the business of defence to the Conservative Ministers, and not further involve the Liberal party in these mischievous and dangerous controversies. For a time he yielded to these representations. But he grew more and more restless, and more and more determined upon an appeal to the Protestant population of Ontario; and at length with the co-operation of a small group of Liberals in Toronto a date was fixed and a meeting announced. On September 30th, 1889, therefore, he spoke to a great meeting at the Horticultural Pavilion with that candour and eloquence which mark all his important deliverances, and it is seldom indeed that one speech has more profoundly influenced public opinion. The temper of the meeting was critical, if not positively hostile. The mention of the name of Mr. D'Alton McCarthy evoked a tempest of cheering. More than once the audience threatened to get out of hand. But the orator held on his way, tactfully, warily and resolutely, until all scoffing was silenced, all hostile feeling overcome, and the meeting keyed to genuine respect for the man, if not quite won to general acceptance of his arguments.

The speech was a clear enunciation of the princi-

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ple of federalism; a vigorous repudiation of the charge that the Liberal party had sacrificed its principles and dishonoured its traditions for the support of a dominant Church; a spirited review of the long struggle of the Liberals of Quebec for civil and religious freedom, and an eloquent assertion of the right of the French people to use their native tongue. He knew, he said, that it was a great disadvantage for a French Canadian not to speak English, but it was not intended that Confederation should be based upon the humiliation of any one race. "It was not intended that any should give up its characteristic, but it was expected that though every nationality might retain its individuality, yet that all would be actuated by one aspiration and would endeavour to form one nation." He said: "If any there are amongst my fellow-countrymen of French origin who have ever dreamed of forming themselves into a small community of Frenchmen on the banks of the St. Lawrence, I am not one of them." They had a long struggle to secure the privileges of British subjects, but though rights were long withheld, at last the concession was made without any reservation and in the most ample manner. "It would be the blackest ingratitude if, after we had sought from England the privileges and rights of British subjects, we were now to reject the responsibilities of British subjects. I say that it would be the blackest ingratitude if, having sought the protection to grow strong, we

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were, when strong enough, to attempt to stab the friendly hand and to refuse to cast in our lot with those who are fellow-countrymen of ours, whose fellow-countrymen we are in deed, and whose birthright we claim as our own inheritance since we became subjects of England."

He denied that it was ever the intention of any Roman Catholic in Lower Canada to put the supremacy of the Pope over the supremacy of the Queen. "If," he said, "the Legislature of Québec, or any other Legislature were ever to attempt to substitute the authority of the Pope for the authority of the Queen, that Legislature by that very fact would place itself beyond the pale of the Canadian Confederation, would place itself beyond the pale of British citizenship, and that act would be simply treason and would have to be dealt with as treason." He reminded his audience that he was a French Canadian Liberal, and belonged to a party that for thirty years had fought the Ultramontanes in the Province of Quebec. But in the demand for the disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act it was a constitutional point that was at issue, and attacks upon the character and teachings of Jesuits and Ultramontanes, could not justify a federal invasion of the legislative domain of the provinces. "This," he said, "is not the place to attack Ultramontanes. The proper ground of attack and defence on this subject is on the soil of the Province of Quebec. I will only say here that the

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Ultramontanes, like all French Canadian Conservatives, have borrowed their political views, not from the British, but from the French school of politics." The power of disallowance, he argued, was the greatest danger to Confederation, and was antagonistic to the federal principle. All our history had shown that when that power was vested in the central Government, principle was sacrificed to expediency.

He dealt also with general political subjects, and particularly with the question of reciprocal trade with the United States, which was fast becoming the chief issue before the country. But, in the main, the address was a hand to hand encounter with the spokesmen of the Equal Rights movement, and the effect upon the country was marked and enduring. It was of this speech that a British journal said: "Mr. Laurier's Toronto speech places him at one bound in the front rank of British statesmen. To the eloquence native to the French Canadian, Mr. Laurier adds honesty, directness of purpose, and pure-minded patriotism, which mark him out as a leader. Men of such high mental and moral power were never more needed in the forefront of affairs in Canada than now."¹ Liberals who feared that no good could come out of Mr. Laurier's appearance in Ontario to resist the demand for disallowance and to justify the position of the Liberal party on the questions raised by the leaders

¹ From the *Canadian Gazette*.

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of the Equal Rights movement, soon perceived their error, and throughout the country it was widely recognized that he had performed a great national service in the spirit of a patriot, and with the courage, discretion, and moderation of a statesman. Henceforth his authority over the Liberal party was undisputed, and the notion assiduously propagated by his political opponents in the English provinces that he was nothing more than an amiable figurehead, became thereafter only the last refuge of incorrigible partisans.

The movement for the abolition of the official use of French in the North-West Territories was an outgrowth of the Equal Rights agitation. The proposition was not unreasonable in itself. There was but a small French population in the Western Territories. It required no seer to foretell that the Western provinces would be English. It was important, if not essential, that these new communities should determine the character of their own local institutions. But the motion which Mr. McCarthy introduced in Parliament took a wide sweep, and threatened the French language in Quebec as well as in the far western country. The preamble to his resolution declared that: "It is expedient in the interest of the national unity of the Dominion that there should be community of language among the people of Canada, and that the enactment in the North-West Territories Act allowing the use of the French language should be expunged there-

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from.”¹ The motion was the more objectionable when the character of some of the speeches Mr. McCarthy had made outside Parliament was considered. “We must buckle on our armour,” he told the people of Ontario. “This is a British country, and the sooner we take in hand our French Canadian fellow subjects and make them British in sentiment and teach them the English language, the less trouble we shall have to prevent. Sooner or later it must be settled.” He added: “Now is the time when the ballot box will decide this great question before the people; and if that does not supply the remedy in this generation, bayonets will supply it in the next.”²

¹ Hansard, January 22nd, 1890.

² From a speech delivered by Mr. McCarthy, at Stayner, July 12th, 1889.

It is interesting to contrast with this speech by Mr. McCarthy a speech made by Mr. Mercier, leader of the nationalist movement in Quebec, at the dedication of a monument to Jacques Cartier, one of the early discoverers, and to Brébeuf, one of the first missionaries to Canada, at Quebec, on June 24th, 1889. Mr. Mercier said: “The Government of which he was the head was ready to disappear if that would be the means of uniting the French Canadian people for the triumph of their sacred cause. For the sake of their nationality, for the sake of their religion they must be united. Religion and nationality formed a harmonious union in their midst. The strength of the French Canadian people lay in the union of the people with the clergy. . . . By coupling the name of the Jesuit hero, Brébeuf, with the immortal Jacques Cartier, they said to their insulters: ‘It is useless to imagine that we will ever cease to be French and Catholic. This monument declares that after a century of separation from our ancient mother we are still French. More than that, we will remain French and Catholic.’ He said this not as a provocation but as a reply. But once more he would say that to render this reply effective they must cease their

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Mr. Laurier read his motion in the light of his speeches, and directly challenged the justice of his position and the propriety of his utterances. The Liberal leader said:

“The French Canadians are to be deprived of fratricidal strife and be united. That was his word of advice to them on this great occasion. Let them cherish it and act accordingly, and all the actions of the fanatics of Ontario would come to naught.

Mr. Laurier spoke on the same occasion, and said: “We are French Canadians, but our country is not confined to the territory overshadowed by the citadel of Quebec; our country is Canada, it is the whole of what is covered by the British flag on the American continent. . . Our fellow-countrymen are not only those in whose veins runs the blood of France. They are all those, whatever their race or whatever their language, whom the fortune of war, the chances of fate, or their own choice have brought among us, and who acknowledge the sovereignty of the British Crown. As far as I am concerned, loudly do I proclaim it, those are my fellow-countrymen. I am a Canadian. But I have told it elsewhere, and with greater pleasure I repeat it here this evening, among all my fellow-countrymen, the first place in my heart is for those in whose veins runs the blood of my own veins. Yet I do not hesitate to say that the rights of my fellow-countrymen of different origin are as dear to me, as sacred to me as the rights of my own race, and if it unfortunately happened that they ever were attacked, I would defend them with just as much energy and vigour as the rights of my own race. . . What I claim for us is an equal share of sun, of justice, of liberty; that share we have, we have it in ample measure, and what we claim for ourselves we are anxious to grant to others. I do not want French Canadians to domineer over any one, nor any one to domineer over them. Equal justice, equal rights. It is written that the sands of the seas are numbered. It is written that not a hair falls from one’s head without the permission of an Eternal Providence, eternally wise. Can we not believe that in that supreme battle here, on the Plains of Abraham, when the fate of arms turned against us, can we not believe that it entered into the decrees of Providence that the two races, up to that time enemies, should henceforth live in peace and harmony, and henceforth form one nation? Such was the inspiring cause of Confederation.”

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their language, not only in the North-West Territories, but wherever their language exists. They must be deprived of everything which constitutes their distinct individuality in this Dominion, and this must be done by legislation now ; but if not done now by legislation, in future it will be done by force and violence—by bullets and bayonets. The expression is not mine, but that of the honourable gentleman himself. It has been repeated, not once or twice, but several times in different parts of the Dominion. So this is the policy upon which the honourable gentleman is endeavouring to form a new party, or to reorganize an old party. This is the policy the honourable gentleman offers to his fellow-countrymen of English origin. I denounce this policy as anti-Canadian ; I denounce it as anti-British ; I denounce it as being at variance with all the traditions of British Government in this country ; I denounce it as fatal to the hope we at one time entertained, and which I, for one, am not disposed to give up, of forming a nation on this continent. I denounce it as a crime, the consequences of which are simply shocking to contemplate. The honourable gentleman may mean nothing more than a mere party device, but he is opening the flood-gates to passions which, once aroused, perhaps no human power may be able to restrain. He is appealing to national and religious passions, the most inflexible of all passions ; and, whatever may be his motive, whatever his end, whatever his purpose, his

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movement cannot be characterized by any other language than that of a national crime."¹

This was strong language, but if Mr. McCarthy could have succeeded in his object, the results would have been hardly less serious than Mr. Laurier predicted. There are in Quebec more than a million of French-speaking people. They learn French at the mother's knee. They are cradled in French traditions. They look to the British flag as the symbol of the covenant which secures them in the possession and enjoyment of their language, their religion, and their local institutions. To put this population under attack and threaten it with loss of privileges and violation of constitutional guarantees is surely repugnant to rational patriotism and responsible statesmanship, and wholly foreign to the spirit of British institutions. In many respects Mr. McCarthy was an admirable figure in Canadian politics. He was singularly courageous and incorruptible. But in his attitude towards Quebec and in his handling of questions which touched the passions and prejudices of the French and Catholic people, he was often rash, impolitic, and unjust to the last degree. In so far as the motion affected the North-West only, Mr. Laurier was not disposed to offer serious objection. He said: "If the bill were a measure for the proscription of the French language in the North-West Territories alone, where the French population is small, I would be inclined to

¹ Hansard, February 17th, 1890.

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say, let the motion pass, and let us get back to those measures of practical usefulness which demand our attention." Nor was he satisfied with an amendment declaring that the then state of things in the North-West should be permanent. He said: "It is impossible to admit that the institutions of the North-West are permanent. On the contrary they are exceptionally temporary; they deal with a state of things which is exceptional in itself; they were devised at a time when there was no population, and they must be modified from time to time as the necessities of the case require." He found his refuge again in the principle of federalism, and foresaw and conceded that the same measure of control over local affairs, and the same right to determine the character of their local institutions, must be granted to the western provinces of the future as were possessed by Quebec and Ontario and the Maritime communities. This was enough for the moment, and thus far on the questions raised by the Equal Rights Association it will hardly be disputed that Mr. Laurier was patient, prudent, and far-seeing, and that his attitude and utterances made for the unity and stability of the Confederation.¹ It was under such circumstances

¹ In 1891 the Parliament of Canada enacted that either the English or French language might be used in the Legislative Assembly of the Territories and in the Courts of Justice, and that the records and journals of the Assembly and all ordinances should be printed in both languages. The law is virtually a dead letter. French is used neither in the Courts nor in the Assembly, and all the official papers are printed

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and in the throes of such issues that Mr. Laurier served his apprenticeship as leader of the Liberal party of Canada. When we review the events of that heated and tempestuous period, we can understand why he strove to induce Mr. Blake to reassume the leadership, and held so tenaciously to the opinion that his race, his religion, and his province were formidable hindrances to the success of the Liberal party in the constituencies.

in English only. The departments sometimes receive letters in French, but not more often than in German or Russian. The school ordinances of the Territories provide for the teaching of a primary course in French. Provision is also made for Catholic representation in the Educational Council for the Territories. Either Protestants or Catholics being in a minority in any school district may insist on the establishment of a Separate School. The majority of the Public Schools are Protestant. Where the Catholics are in the majority, their school is called the Public School and the Protestant the Separate School; but the Protestant Separate Schools are not denominational and are subject to exactly the same regulations as the Public Schools. The system is said to work smoothly.

CHAPTER XIX

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

COMMERCIAL and political conditions in Canada were seriously affected by the adoption of free trade in Great Britain. The new policy involved the repeal of the Navigation Laws and the abolition of the preferences in favour of colonial products. In 1840 there were more than eighty differential duties in favour of the Colonies. During the next ten or twelve years, all of these, except the preferences on timber, food, wine and spirits, were abolished. In 1821 the duty on colonial timber was ten shillings a load, while a tax of fifty-five shillings was imposed on foreign timber. In 1842 and again in 1843, the duties were reduced, and in 1846 legislation was adopted which by 1848 cut down the preference to fifteen shillings on foreign, and one shilling on colonial timber. In 1851 the preference was again reduced by half, and finally in 1860 the duties were equalized at one shilling on foreign and colonial timber alike. So it was with sugar. Down from 1844 the preference was steadily reduced, and in 1854 was finally abolished. Canada was hit hard by the equalization of the timber duties, and it is doubtful if the West Indies have ever recovered from the great blow dealt to their staple industry

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by the abolition of the preference on colonial sugar. The repeal of the Navigation Laws was contemporaneous with the disappearance of the system of preferential treatment of colonial products. These laws, which according to Adam Smith were founded in national animosity, restricted the coasting trade to British vessels, and required that the owners, masters, and three-fourths of the crews of such vessels should be British subjects. It was impossible that such regulations could survive the teaching of Adam Smith and the ascendancy of the free traders; and in 1849 British trade was thrown open to the ships of the world, subject only to the provision that in order to secure reciprocal treatment from other nations, prohibitions or restrictions may by Order-in-Council be imposed upon the ships of any country in which British ships are liable to similar prohibitions or restrictions.

Down to the repeal of the Navigation Laws, the commercial fleets of Halifax, St. John, Quebec, and Montreal had a practical monopoly of the trade of the West Indies, while the differential duties in favour of colonial products gave the grain and timber of the North American colonies a substantial advantage in British markets. It is not strange, therefore, that these revolutionary changes in the historic policy of the Mother Country spread dismay throughout the colonies. All the material advantages of the connection with the Empire were swept away. The chief industries of the Canadas

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and of the Maritime Provinces, in which great sums were invested, and upon which the labour and commerce of the country mainly depended, had to be adjusted to the changed circumstances. The process of adjustment necessarily involved loss and hardship. For a time the business energy of the country was paralyzed. The most adventurous spirits hesitated to embark in new enterprises. The output of old industries was restricted and wages and profits reduced.

These are the inevitable consequences of the removal of tariff discriminations, except by slow degrees and with infinite discretion. If by Acts of Parliament we establish particular industries and direct trade into particular channels, we turn the industrial energies of the people from other pursuits; and in the event of a reversal of the legislative policy, jeopardize capital and imperil the interests created by discriminatory tariffs. In the establishment of the free trade system the Home Government proceeded by gradual and calculated stages; but the colonists could not keep step with the new commercial policy, and as their fiscal advantages in Britain fell away, and new competitors met them in ports long closed to foreign vessels, colonial resentment deepened, and the tone of colonial remonstrances grew more angry and vehement. Treason, economic heresy, and revolutionary propaganda are the natural brood of commercial depression. The annexation manifesto of 1849 was not due altogether

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to the intense gust of popular passion evoked by the appropriation of £100,000 of public money as compensation for rebellion losses in Quebec. That measure exasperated Conservatives who had stood as the champions of order and authority against the forces of Papineau, Nelson, and Mackenzie, but no mere domestic incident could have driven such men as the Redpaths, the Molsons, the Torrances, the Workmans, Francis Johnson, John Rose, A. T. Galt, David L. Macpherson, L. H. Holton, Edward Goff Penny, James Ferrier, and J. J. C. Abbott, genuinely attached as they were to British institutions, to declare for separation from the Empire. Loss of trade was at the basis of the manifesto, and commercial rather than political considerations inspired the movement for political union with the United States.¹

One memorable paragraph of the address, signed by more than three hundred of the representative

¹ "The immediate effects were, of course, in the highest degree discouraging, and a moody feeling of discontent pervaded the mercantile community of Canada. Shackled by such restrictions as those under which they laboured, they could not hope to compete with the capital and enterprise of the United States in prosecuting the carrying trade. A large majority of the persons most seriously affected had always been zealous loyalists. They now considered that their loyalty had been ill requited by the Mother Country, and the conviction was forced upon them that their position would be improved by annexation. . . . Three-fourths of the merchants were bankrupt, and real estate was practically unmarketable. As usual in such cases, most of the evils under which the colony groaned were charged by the sufferers upon the Mother Country."—Dent's "Canada Since the Union," Vol. II, pages 128-129.

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merchants and traders of the country, tells how dark was the situation and how gloomy the outlook. "The reversal," said the manifesto, "of the ancient policy of Great Britain, whereby she withdrew from her colonies their wonted protection in her markets, has produced the most disastrous effects upon Canada. In surveying the actual condition of the country, what but ruin or rapid decay meets the eye? Our provincial Government and civic corporations embarrassed; our banking and other securities greatly depreciated; our mercantile and agricultural interests alike unprosperous; real estate scarcely saleable upon any terms; our unrivalled rivers, lakes, and canals almost unused; whilst commerce abandons our shores, and the circulating capital amassed under a more favourable system is dissipated, with none from any quarter to replace it. Thus, without available capital, unable to effect a loan with foreign States, or with the Mother Country—although offering security greatly superior to that which readily obtains money, both from the United States and Great Britain, when other than colonists are the applicants—crippled, therefore, and checked in the full career of private and public enterprise, this possession of the British Crown—our country—stands before the world in humiliating contrast with its immediate neighbours, exhibiting every symptom of a nation fast sinking to decay."

It was argued that the proposed union would

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render Canada a field for American capital; equalize the value of real estate on both sides of the boundary; give stability to our institutions; raise our public, corporate, and private credit; increase our commerce both with the United States and foreign countries, without necessarily diminishing to any great extent our intercourse with Great Britain; render our rivers and canals the highway for the immigration to and exports from the West; introduce manufactures, particularly into Lower Canada, where water privileges and labour were abundant and cheap, and thus give remunerative employment to a non-producing population; secure forthwith the construction of railways with American capital, as feeders for all the great lines then approaching the Canadian frontiers; raise the value of agricultural produce at once to a par with that of the United States; greatly cheapen agricultural implements and many of the necessities of life; enhance the value of timber; give to our shipbuilders at Quebec and on the Great Lakes an unlimited market in all parts of the American continent; while in the place of war and the alarms of war with a neighbour, there would be peace and amity between this country and the States, and in disagreements between the Republic and her chief, if not only rival among nations, the soil of Canada would not become the sanguinary arena for their settlement.¹

¹ Lord George Bentinck, then leader of the English Tory party, writing to Disraeli on April 16th, 1846, said: "I hope we shall have an

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In Toronto a weekly journal called *The Independent* was established to carry on the agitation, and its chief arguments centred in the withdrawal of the colonial preferences and the necessity thereby created for free access to the markets of the United States. The movement, however, made slight headway in Upper Canada, and was actively resisted by the British American League formed at Kingston, of which John A. Macdonald was one of the chief spirits, and which declared for the maintenance of connection with the Mother Country, for a confederation of all the provinces, and for a protectionist policy.¹ At a joint meeting of the British American League and the Colonial Association of New Brunswick, it was resolved: "That these colonies cannot remain in their present position without the prospect of immediate ruin, and that it is the duty of the Imperial Government either, first, to restore to the colonies a preference in the British markets over foreign goods; or, second, to have opened to them the markets of foreign countries, important deputation over from Canada, representing that the inevitable results of these free trade measures in corn and timber will be to alienate the feelings of our Canadian colonists, and to induce them to follow their sordid interests, which will now undoubtedly be best consulted and most promoted by annexation to the United States."—From "Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography," by Benjamin Disraeli, 5th edition, London, 1852, page 180.

¹ See Pope's "Memoirs of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. 1, pages 71-72; J. C. Dent's "Canada Since the Union of 1841," Vol. II, pages 172, 173; and Lt.-Col. J. P. Macpherson's "Life of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. I, pages 187-196.

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and more especially the United States, upon terms of reciprocity." The Parliament of Canada, in 1846, passed an address in which it was declared that the abandonment of the protection principle, the very basis of the colonial commercial system, was calculated materially to retard the agricultural improvement of the country, and check its hitherto rising prosperity. Situated as Canada was, with a climate so severe as to leave barely one-half of the year open for intercourse by the St. Lawrence with the Mother Country, the cost of transporting her products to market was much greater than was paid by the inhabitants of the United States, and without a measure of protection or some equivalent advantage, Canada could not compete successfully with that country. The improvement of water communications in Canada had been undertaken on the strength of the advantage it would give to the export trade to England. Should free trade be adopted the Canadian exports would fall off, there would be a diminution in the revenues from canal tolls, and consequently in the power of Canada to pay the debt guaranteed by England. The shipping interests in Montreal would be injured, and the consumption of British manufactures in Canada would be lessened. "It is much to be feared that should the inhabitants of Canada, from the withdrawal of all protection to their staple products, find that they cannot successfully compete with their neighbours of the United States in the only

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market open to them, they will naturally and of necessity begin to doubt whether remaining a portion of the British Empire will be of that paramount advantage which they have hitherto found it to be.”¹

In the reply of the Imperial authorities to this remonstrance there is a touch of satire which must have been irritating and unwelcome at the moment. Mr. Gladstone, who had succeeded Lord Stanley as Colonial Secretary, stated that Her Majesty did not recognize any distinction in her affection for her subjects in England and those

¹ “Scarcely had the impulse been felt, when English policy, impelled by free trade principles, well nigh swept away every hope that had been inspired by glimpses of a dawning prosperity. The withdrawal of that artificial protection which had been accorded by the Imperial Parliament to the colonial trade forced these provinces into the family of nations. Canada felt the shock the most, but, imbued with a spirit of self-reliance, at once looked about for means whereby she might strengthen her crippled commerce. England had discriminated in favour of colonial breadstuffs and lumber, and the provinces had imposed differential duties in the interest of the Mother Country. The commercial policy of both had thus been in harmony. The repeal of the Corn Laws threw open to the United States a market in which the colonies had been hitherto favoured, and left the Canadians to struggle with a rival abroad which at home used every means to prevent their trade getting any headway. Canada possessed canals, but the commerce which they had been built to facilitate died on its hands, and the Navigation Laws then prevented foreign vessels from using them. The subsequent repeal of the Navigation Laws gave another advantage to the States which they have never reciprocated. The United States ship-owners were admitted to share the coasting trade of the Empire, and the provinces saw, not without chagrin, American vessels both on the sea-coast and on their lakes, enjoying benefits for which nothing was granted to British subjects in return.”—W. A. Foster in *The Westminster Review* for October, 1866.

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beyond the seas. The Parliament of England was showing its equal regard for all the subjects of the Queen by enacting measures especially intended to ameliorate the conditions of the poorest and most numerous class of the people. It would be a source of the greatest pain to Her Majesty's Government if they could share in the impression that the connection between that country and Canada derived its force from the exchange of commercial preferences only. That might be a relation consisting in the exchange not of benefits but of burdens. Her Majesty's Government hoped that the connection rested upon a firmer basis, upon resemblance in origin, laws and manners, in what inwardly binds men and communities of men together, as well as in the close association of material interests, which interests, however, they felt would be advanced by commercial freedom. The people of Canada could not desire that the market for their farm products should be maintained by means of a perpetual tax upon the people of England. The Gladstone Government's acknowledgment of the Home Rule resolutions of the Canadian Parliament more than a third of a century later was hardly more frigid or more incisive.

In dealing with this correspondence and the adoption of free trade by Great Britain, the *Toronto Globe* said it was amusing to watch the effects of the new British policy upon the Tory press of the province. The comments of these papers

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afforded an admirable illustration of the selfishness of Toryism. Give them everything they could desire and they were brimful of loyalty. They would chant pæans till they were sick, and drink goblets till they were blind, in praise of "wise and benevolent governors" who gave them all the offices and all the emoluments. But let their interest, real or imaginary, be affected, and how soon did their loyalty evaporate. Now there was talk of separation from the Mother Country unless the mother would continue to feed them in the method prescribed by the child. Tory loyalty was estimated in pounds, shillings and pence. When these were withdrawn it sustained a complete collapse. It was a strange thing, the Tory's loyalty. You might trample on every privilege, you might oppose the passage of every good law, you might enact class legislation by which the interests of the many were entirely sacrificed for the few, and you would not disturb the Tory's loyalty. He seemed to be the better pleased to show his loyalty for the preservation of things as they were. But the moment the Government ventured legislation on a broad, just, and comprehensive scale, the Tory's loyalty vanished. *The Globe* pointed out that Canada's exports of wheat had never equalled 200,000 quarters, and therefore her loss by the abolition of the preference would not exceed £40,000, while the British people, largely of the poorer classes, would gain £8,000,000 in the remission of taxation. Canada had a higher

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destiny before her than to be merely the annual exporter of a few hundred thousand bushels of flour to Great Britain. From this *The Globe* went on to advocate the establishment of manufactures in Canada, which would afford a home market for the products of her farms, and overcome the loss sustained by the abolition of the British preferences in favour of colonial products.¹

It was, of course, out of the question to hope that the petitions and remonstrances of the colonies could effect a reversal of the free trade policy of England in the very hour of its inception, and particularly in view of the teaching of the Manchester school, which set trade above colonies and extension of commerce above extension of empire. The idea, in fact, was then growing in the minds of many British statesmen that colonial possessions were a danger and a disadvantage, and a few years later there was the open advocacy of dismemberment, which an American has described as "the ass-born policy of the British Government."² Still, British

¹ See "Commercial Federation and Colonial Trade Policy," by Prof. John Davidson, of the University of New Brunswick, for a careful and comprehensive account of the events of this period.

² "Imperialism," by C. De Thierry, page 19.

In a contribution to the *Atlantic Monthly*, for March, 1902, on "England and the War of Secession," Mr. Goldwin Smith said: "Gladstone wished that the North should let the South go, and be indemnified in course of time by the voluntary accession of Canada. He said this in a letter to a friend, who, fearing that the letter might be embarrassing to the writer thereafter, thought it better to keep it to himself."

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Ministers loyally and energetically seconded the efforts of Canada to effect a reciprocity arrangement with the United States, and finally in 1854, mainly through the patient, judicious, and skilful diplomacy of Lord Elgin, a treaty was successfully negotiated. This convention gave to the fishermen of the United States, in common with British subjects, the right to take fish of every kind, except shell-fish, on the sea-coasts and shores, and in the bays, harbours, and creeks of Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, and the adjacent islands, with permission to land upon the coasts and shores of such colonies and islands for the purpose of drying their nets and curing their fish; and admitted into the United States from the British provinces free of duty:—grain, flour, animals, meats, cotton, wool, seeds, vegetables, fruits, fish, poultry, eggs, hides, furs, skins, stone, marble, slate, butter, cheese, tallow, lard, horns, manures, ores of metals, coal, pitch, tar, turpentine, ashes, timber, lumber, firewood, plants, shrubs, trees, fish-oil, rice, broom-corn, bark, gypsum, burr or grindstones, dye-stuffs, flax, hemp, tow, rags, and tobacco unmanufactured. The free navigation of the St. Lawrence and of the canals in Canada was conceded to the citizens of the United States, and the navigation of Lake Michigan secured to British subjects. It was also provided “that no export or other duty shall be levied on lumber or timber of any kind cut on that portion

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of the American territory in the State of Maine watered by the River St. John and its tributaries, and floated down that river to the sea, when the same is shipped to the United States from the Province of New Brunswick."

Under this liberal and comprehensive convention the trade of Canada had a remarkable and splendid expansion, and very close and intimate business relationships were established between the American states and the British provinces. Possibly we over-estimate the advantages which Canada derived from the arrangement. In any event we should have measurably recovered from the disappearance of the British preferences and the repeal of the Navigation Laws, and possibly have discovered, as we did discover so many years later, that a free British market has a voracious maw for Canadian products, and that an abiding trade depression in a country with Canada's wealth of resources and thrifty and energetic population need never be apprehended. Still the Treaty of 1854 was of timely and of signal benefit to Canada, and also of substantial advantage to the United States. The value of fish taken by the fishing vessels of Maine and Massachusetts in the fisheries of the Gulf and in Canadian waters increased from \$280,000 in 1854 to \$1,265,000 in 1856. Similarly, the mackerel fishery increased from 250 vessels, manned by 2,750 men, to 600 vessels, employing 9,000 men, and the value of the catch from \$85,000 to

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\$4,567,000. The gross exchange of natural products between the British provinces and the United States rose from \$20,000,000 in 1853, to \$84,000,000 in 1866; and during the thirteen years that the treaty was in operation, our exports to the United States were in round figures \$267,000,000 and our imports therefrom \$363,000,000. Hence, even if we allow for the inflated prices which prevailed during the war of the rebellion, it is still manifest that a free American market is of great consequence to this country, and that we cannot easily over-estimate the importance of good commercial relations with the United States.

The treaty was terminated in 1866 at the instance of the American Government. Mr. McCulloch, Secretary of the Treasury, in a report to Congress in 1865 said: "The people of the United States could not consent to be taxed as producers while those outside of our boundaries, exempt from our burdens, shall be permitted as competitors to have full access to our markets." J. W. Ingalls, collector of customs at Cape Vincent, reported: "So far as the trade of this district is an indication of the relative advantages of the reciprocity treaty to the two countries interested, they are in about the proportion of twenty to one in favour of Canada. . . . It appears that our imports of dutiable and free goods before and since the treaty was in about the proportion of one to twenty, while our exports of the same before and since, show the proportion of

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twenty to one. In other words we offer a premium of 95 per cent. of our former revenue for Canadian competition in our markets while they pay to us but 5 per cent. of theirs to compete with them in their markets." It was contended at Washington that Canada had not fairly observed the terms of the convention. In 1858 and 1859 higher customs duties were imposed upon manufactures, the duties upon cottons were increased from 15 per cent. to 20 per cent., and upon iron from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent. Protests came alike from Westminster and from Washington. The new tariffs and the general bearings and results of the treaty were investigated by commissioners acting in behalf of the Washington Government. George W. Brega, one of these commissioners, reported that the free navigation of the St. Lawrence was a matter of necessity in view of the immense growth of the great North-West. He represented that the principal reason for the termination of the reciprocity treaty was not so much a consideration of inequality in its provisions—for these might have been amended without going to the extent of abrogating the convention—as the fact that the rebellion had forced upon the United States a condition of things which did not exist when the treaty was made, and which rendered its continuance an embarrassment in the arrangement of their complex tariff system. He, however, declared in favour of re-opening commercial intercourse with

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the British provinces. Israel T. Hatch, another of these commissioners, found that "during six months when the St. Lawrence route is open it is seldom safe, owing to strong currents, immense masses of ice, and fogs almost perpetual." He contended that "viewed as a question of national integrity, the conduct of the Canadian Parliament in taxing the products of American industry almost to their exclusion from the province must be pronounced to be a violation, not only of the letter and spirit of the treaty, but of the amity and good faith in which it was conceived."¹ He reported, therefore, in favour of abrogation. The position of the Canadian Government was clearly set forth by A. T. Galt, Canadian Minister of Finance, in his reply to the remonstrances of the Imperial Government against the protective character of the new Canadian tariff. Mr. Galt said: "The policy of the present Government in re-adjusting the tariff has been, in the first place, to obtain sufficient revenue for the public wants; secondly, to do so in such a manner as would most fairly distribute the additional burdens upon the different classes of the community; and it will undoubtedly be a subject of gratification to the Government if they find the duties absolutely required to meet their engagements should incidentally benefit and encourage the production in the country of many of those articles which we now import."

¹ Executive documents, 40th Congress, 2nd Session.

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The United States have never considered the free entry of their natural products into Canada as an adequate equivalent for the free admission of the natural products of Canada into American markets. Hence they held that the very basis of the Treaty of 1854 was violated by the increase of Canadian duties on imported manufactures. Besides, the unfriendly attitude of the official classes of Britain towards the North during the civil war, and occasional manifestations of Southern feeling in Canada, bred resentment at Washington, and disposed Northern politicians to punish the British provinces by the withdrawal of commercial privileges. Congress, in short, was manifestly determined to abrogate the treaty, or to exact, as the price of its continuance, extraordinary concessions from Canada.¹ In 1862 the Committee of Commerce of

¹ "The causes which led to the repeal of a treaty so largely advantageous to the United States have been long well understood. The commercial classes in the Eastern and Western States were, on the whole, favourable to an enlargement of the treaty, so as to bring in British Columbia and Vancouver Island, now colonies of the Crown, and to include certain other articles, the produce of both countries; but the real cause of its repeal was the prejudice in the North against the provinces for their supposed sympathy for the Confederate States during the war of the rebellion. A large body of men in the North believed that the repeal of the treaty would sooner or later force the provinces into annexation, and a bill was actually introduced in the House of Representatives providing for the admission of those countries—a mere political straw, it is true, but still showing the current of opinion in some quarters in those days."—"Canada and the United States," an historical retrospect by Sir John Bourinot.

"If there was one thing more than another, apart from the irritation growing out of the events which happened during the late war, which

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the House of Representatives proposed to supersede the treaty with a commercial Zollverein, but Mr. Galt intimated that "the project of an American Zollverein, to which the British provinces should become parties, is one wholly inconsistent with the maintenance of their connection with Great Britain, and also opposed on its own merits to the interest of the people of these provinces."¹

Opinion in the United States was by no means unanimous for the abrogation of the treaty. At the instance of the Board of Trade of Montreal, the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York in 1865 undertook an investigation into conditions under the treaty, and prepared a luminous and exhaustive report on trade relations between the British provinces and the United States. The select committee appointed to conduct the investigation addressed letters of inquiry to the Boards of Trade in the cities chiefly interested in trade with Canada, and the replies received were incorporated in the report. The Board of Trade of Philadelphia declared unanimously for the abrogation of the treaty,

instigated them in abrogating the reciprocity treaty, it was the belief that they could compel us into a closer political alliance with them. It is, therefore, desirable, and indeed our manifest duty, to show them, not in a spirit of hostility, but certainly in that of independence, that while we value their friendship and value their trade, we will not conform to unreasonable terms, and will not have either our commercial policy or our political allegiance dictated to us by any foreign country."—From the budget speech of A. T. Galt, June 26th, 1866.

¹ Report of the Hon. A. T. Galt, adopted by the Canadian Government, March 17th, 1862.

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on the ground that its advantages had been altogether in favour of Great Britain. The Board of Trade of Chicago pronounced the subject one "of great importance," but reported "conflicting views respecting the advantages and disadvantages of the treaty." The Troy Board of Trade declared against abrogation. The Board of Trade of Baltimore held that the general operations of the treaty had been beneficial to both countries, and declared that they would regret to see the arrangement terminated. Some modifications and changes might be needed, but it appeared to the Board that a free exchange with each other of their chief products was desirable, and the mutual concessions granted in the treaty of the free navigation of the St. Lawrence and Lake Michigan, and the right of taking fish on the shores bordering on each country were very important. These privileges, enjoyed for so long a period, could not now be abolished without much inconvenience and perhaps ill-feeling, particularly on the part of the border residents. They, therefore, recommended the continuance of the treaty, with such modifications as the changed conditions of trade might require, and with the object of increasing rather than diminishing the free commercial intercourse then existing under the treaty. The Merchants' Exchange of Bath, Me., reported that the treaty as it stood was satisfactory. They were not in favour of its abrogation nor of negotiating a new convention, and were not aware of any disadvantage

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that the United States had suffered under the arrangement.

The committee summarized these various reports, and then proceeded to declare the position of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York. It was pointed out that in 1852 the Chamber had memorialized Congress in favour of a reciprocity treaty with the British provinces; that in 1856 in order to "remove all commercial restrictions on the commerce and navigation of the Canadas and the United States," they had proposed to admit into the respective countries the natural productions and manufactures of both, and to open to their vessels the coasting trade on the intervening waters of the two countries, with "all the advantages that now exist between adjoining States;" and again in 1859 had memorialized Congress to enlarge the operations of the existing Reciprocity Treaty by removing all duties and restrictions on the importations into the United States of all articles, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the Canadas, and to permit all vessels built in Canada to participate on equal terms in the shipping and coasting trade on the interior lakes and waters intervening between the two countries, and to open to the free and common use of both all coasts, ports, and water communications whenever the British Government reciprocated by a similar enactment.

They said: "Across and far beyond a remarkable natural chain of lakes and rivers, which seems to be

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rather a bond than a barrier, there is a country to which we wish well as our fathers did. Its institutions assimilate to ours, and if not entirely so, it is its own business. In the largest degree, the population has with us a common ancestry, and such portions of it as have not, may find among us great numbers of their own language and creed, who have found here their preferred home." They took a liberal view of the new Canadian tariff, to which such strong exception was taken at Washington, and said: "With regard to the duties levied in Canada on American manufactures, Mr. Galt, the present able Minister of Finance of Canada, explained to the Manchester Board of Commerce when he was last in England, that the colony was too poor to bear direct taxation for increasing the revenue, the public debt being \$60,000,000, of which \$20,000,000 had been expended on canals, and as much more on railways; that the duties of 20 and 10 per cent. on manufactures of textile fabrics were moderate, and for revenue and not for protection; and any further increase would be only to keep pace with the increase of the American tariff caused by the war." They argued that the additional duties laid on American manufactured imports into Canada were still moderate, and were for revenue purposes only; that "with our own present high tariff, we are the last persons who have a right to complain of any similar procedure;" and that, "notwithstanding the provincial duties, our

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manufacturers find a large outlet in that direction. The United States could still furnish an immense variety of fabrics which the Canadas needed and could not as yet manufacture for themselves, and in return for this trade could offer the British provinces "their best and nearest markets, great cities on the lakes, greater cities on the ocean, where capital is always ready for the purchase of their products."

The report proceeded: "Looking at these lakes, the Mediterranean of the North, so ingeniously connected by the enterprise of man that they have become almost one, and noticing how far into the interior their cheap and abundant navigation extends, it would seem like shutting our eyes to the gifts of Providence, bestowed in this magnificent and useful form, if, by any short-sighted or narrow policy, we should close them against further progress. It would seem the part of extreme folly, if, after constructing so many iron paths to these reservoirs, which collect from every bay and inlet on their shores the materials for inland distribution or foreign consumption, we should close them now." If the reciprocity arrangement entirely fell, the whole advantage gained from the free navigation of the St. Lawrence would fall with it. In that case the great agricultural interests in the West would be excluded from a natural and cheap outlet they now possessed, and be driven entirely to rely on the American canals, which were choked up

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with business already, and required enlargement, at an enormous expense, to do the transportation pressed upon them. It was for the interest, as it was the right, of the cereal and other crop producers in the West, to have, not only a domestic market, but a foreign one near their own boundaries, which would cost nothing but an intelligent appreciation and a proper commercial use of them. It was added that, "To throw away the existing commerce we possess under the treaty, which in the aggregate since 1854 amounts to upwards of \$300,000,000, is to ignore the existence of a great country on our borders, our commerce with which is more secure from maritime dangers than any other we possess; and to retire from the full use of the great lakes and rivers emptying into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, their natural outlet, would be an act of very doubtful policy, if not positive injury." The Committee therefore recommended that the policy of the Board founded on sound commercial principles should be maintained, and the Reciprocity Treaty renewed with such just and liberal modifications as would render it still more advantageous to all concerned.¹

In 1866 the treaty was terminated, and for a time there was just such gloom and apprehension in Canada as prevailed when the Navigation Laws

¹ See Report of the Select Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York on the Reciprocity Treaty as to trade between the British North American provinces and the United States of America, 1865.

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were repealed, and the British preferences in favour of colonial products abolished.¹ Few among the public men of Canada then attempted to deny the enormous advantages of free access to American markets, and almost from the very day that the treaty was denounced, the British and Canadian authorities laboured at Washington for its revival, or for the negotiation of some similar measure of reciprocal trade between the two countries. There followed thirty years of vain and impotent diplomacy, thirty years of harsh tariff treatment of Canada, thirty years of gradual relaxation of

¹ The industry of Canada had been largely directed to the supply of the American markets with commodities for home consumption, as well as for foreign exportation, and the repeal in 1866 of the Reciprocity Treaty, under which so vast a trade had grown up, rendered imperatively necessary prompt measures to open new markets for the sale of Canadian produce. These measures were at once taken. Under the influence of the formal notice given by the United States in 1865, of their intention to terminate the treaty, federation of the provinces, then under discussion, was hurried on, and became a *fait accompli* within fifteen months after its repeal. The Intercolonial Railway was at once undertaken, at a cost of over \$20,000,000, at the national expense, to secure direct connection to and from the Atlantic Ocean, at Halifax and St. John, on Canadian soil; and the last section of that road will shortly be open for traffic. Commissioners were despatched to the British and other West India Islands, and to South American States, to promote the extension of direct trade between them and the Dominion. The enlargement of the canals, the improvement of the navigation of the Lakes and River St. Lawrence, the construction of the Bay Verte canal, to connect the waters of the Bay of Fundy and the St. Lawrence, the subsidizing of ocean and river steamship lines, and the promotion of the great ship-building and fishery interests, all received a new and vigorous impetus.—From the memorandum of the British Plenipotentiaries appointed to negotiate the Reciprocity Treaty of 1874.

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Canadian rights under solemn treaty engagements in order to preserve good relations on this continent and keep the peace between Great Britain and the United States. When John A. Macdonald, George Brown, George E. Cartier, and A. T. Galt visited London in 1865 to discuss the details of Confederation with British Ministers, they urged upon the Imperial Government the importance to Canada of a renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, and fruitless representations to this end were made both through the American Minister in London and the British Minister at Washington. During the same year in response to a suggestion from Washington that something could perhaps be accomplished by concurrent legislation, Mr. Galt and Mr. Howland went down to the American capital, and apparently found the temper of the Executive and of Congress not wholly unfavourable to some modification of the imposts upon Canadian products in return for equivalent concessions from Canada. At any rate, the Canadian Government decided to send to Washington a delegation representative of all the provinces which had embraced the scheme of Confederation, and Galt, Howland, Wm. A. Henry, of Nova Scotia, and Albert J. Smith, of New Brunswick, were appointed to conduct the negotiations.

It was in consequence of the agreement made by Galt and Howland with the Ways and Means Committee of Congress to accept a scheme of con-

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current legislation instead of a Treaty of Reciprocity that George Brown withdrew from the Coalition Government. He was especially opposed to any arrangement that would give the United States proprietary rights in the Canadian canals, and considered that commercial intercourse, based upon reciprocal legislation would not afford that element of stability which is essential to successful commerce. "I resigned," he said in the Senate some years afterwards, "because I felt very strongly that though we in Canada derived great advantage from the Treaty of 1854, the American people derived still greater advantage from it. I had no objection to that, and was quite ready to renew the old treaty, or even to extend it largely on fair terms of reciprocity. But I was not willing to ask for renewal as a favour to Canada; I was not willing to offer special inducements for renewal without fair concessions in return; I was not willing that the canals and inland waters of Canada should be made the joint property of the United States and Canada, and be maintained at their joint expense; I was not willing that the customs and excise duties of Canada should be assimilated to the prohibitory rates of the United States; and very especially was I unwilling that any such arrangement should be entered into with the United States, dependent upon the frail tenure of reciprocal legislation, repealable at any moment at the caprice of either

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party.”¹ Mr. Mackenzie in his life of George Brown adds: “There can be no doubt that Mr. Brown felt a personal slight was offered him when Mr. Howland was sent with Mr. Galt on a mission to promote reciprocity—when Mr. Howland, who was not a member of the confederate council on commercial treaties, was sent on such a mission, although Mr. Brown and Mr. Galt were the members of that council.”²

Nothing, however, resulted from the negotiations at Washington. The terms on this, as on so many other occasions, were such as Canada could not accept. The American proposals provided that only millstones, rags, firewood, grindstones, plasters, and gypsum should be admitted free of duty; that existing fishing arrangements should continue; that the common use of the canals should be enjoyed by both countries on equal terms; that the bonding system should not be disturbed; and that a scale of

¹ Speech of the Hon. George Brown in the Senate, March 5th, 1875.

² “Life and Speeches of the Hon. George Brown,” by Alexander Mackenzie, page 103.

Sir Francis Hincks in his Budget Speech on March 10th, 1871, said: “Now as to the negotiations at Washington—why, sir, the honourable member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Galt), is the last member in this House who should have said one word upon this subject. The honourable member said that my remarks were an excuse unworthy of a Finance Minister, and talked of the duties which affected our own people, and said the Government should legislate for them only. But, does the honourable gentleman remember the year 1866, when he was negotiating with the Committee of Ways and Means at Washington? When he was carrying on negotiations there with the evident intention of basing our tariff on that of the United States?”

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duties should be imposed on all products that were free under the old treaty. This was at best an insignificant advance upon existing arrangements, and as we have said, was summarily rejected by the Canadian Government. Here the question stood in 1868 when the first tariff of the Dominion was adopted, and when first appeared in the schedules the statutory offer of reciprocity in natural products which with modifications to suit changing circumstances was a feature of all Canadian tariffs down to 1894.

In 1869 the Hon. John Rose, Canadian Minister of Finance, attempted to renew negotiations through the British Minister at Washington. Just what proposals were then made in behalf of Canada will probably never be revealed. In the House of Commons in 1870, Mr. Huntington charged that the Canadian Ministers submitted an offer of complete reciprocity in manufactured goods as well as in natural products, and the Hon. George Brown, speaking in the Senate in 1875, declared that: "This *projet* included the cession for a term of years of our fisheries to the United States; the enlargement and enjoyment of our canals; the free enjoyment of the navigation of the St. Lawrence River; the assimilation of our customs and excise duties; the concession of an import duty equal to the internal revenue taxes of the United States; and the free admission into either country of certain manufactures of the other." It will be observed that Mr.

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Brown's statement in the Senate does not go as far as that of Mr. Huntington in the House of Commons five years before. Mr. Huntington insisted that he had seen the memorandum which passed between the British and American negotiators, and that the British proposals amounted to complete free trade between Canada and the United States.¹ Mr. Brown speaking in 1875, said that the *projet* included the assimilation of customs and excise duties, and the free admission into either country of certain manufactures of the other. This was something short of absolute free trade, although it approached very nearly to an exclusive commercial partnership between the two countries. Sir Francis Hincks, who had succeeded to the office of Finance Minister, claimed that such communications as had passed at Washington were confidential, and denied that the British proposals were as wide and liberal as Huntington had alleged. Sir John Macdonald also denied that an offer of complete reciprocity was made, or that discrimination against Great Britain was sanctioned. It is understood that the records of the Canadian Privy Council on the subject have disappeared. Mr. Fish, Secretary of State, in reply to an inquiry from the American Senate, said that the conversations held were too informal to be made the subject of an official report,²

¹ See reports of the debate in the *Toronto Globe* and the *Toronto Leader*, March 17th, 1870.

² Report communicated to the Senate by President Grant, December 22nd, 1869.

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and President Grant in his message of December, 1869, said: "The question of renewing a treaty for reciprocal trade between the United States and the British provinces on this continent has not been favourably considered by the Administration. The advantages of such a treaty would be wholly in favour of the British producer. Except, possibly, a few engaged in the trade between the two sections, no citizen of the United States would be benefited by reciprocity. Our internal taxation would prove a protection to the British producer almost equal to the protection which our manufacturers now receive from the tariff. Some arrangement, however, for the regulation of commercial intercourse between the United States and the Dominion of Canada may be desirable."¹ Thus was rejected perhaps the most generous proposition ever submitted in behalf of Canada to the authorities at Washington, and we seem now to have gone far beyond the day when the Canadian people would sanction any such revolutionary arrangement.

Equally abortive was the attempt of Sir John Macdonald and his fellow commissioners to associate reciprocity with the negotiation of the Washington Treaty. The British representatives offered to concede access to the deep sea-fisheries of Canada in return for a renewal of the Treaty of 1854. But the American commissioners declared that that treaty had proved unsatisfactory to the

¹ First annual message of President Grant, December 6th, 1869.

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United States, and that its renewal was not in their interests, and would not be in accordance with the sentiments of their people. In 1873, the National Board of Trade of the United States memorialized Congress to appoint a commission to frame a treaty, and the Dominion Board of Trade addressed the Canadian Government to the same effect. But the commission was not appointed, and nothing resulted from the representations of the commercial bodies.

A few months later the Government of Sir John Macdonald resigned office, and a new set of Canadian Ministers, as eager as their predecessors for liberal trade relations between Canada and the United States, turned their faces towards Washington in pursuit of a better commercial understanding between the two countries, and easier access for Canadian products into American markets. The Hon. George Brown was appointed British Plenipotentiary to act with Sir Edward Thornton, then British Minister to the United States. Mr. Brown's appointment was singularly wise. He was the resolute friend of the North during the civil war, and among British statesmen stood only below Bright and Cobden in appreciation of American institutions, and in desire for the integrity of the union. He was, at the same time, aggressively Canadian and heartily British. His patriotism was distinguished for love of his own country rather than for hatred of his neighbour, and that is not the worst temper in which to face

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international negotiations. Mr. Brown was also thoroughly impressed with the importance of breaking down trade barriers between Canada and the United States. He always admitted that Canadian trade had greatly prospered under the Treaty of 1854, while insisting, with the logic of a free trader, that the neighbouring States had derived a corresponding benefit from the arrangement. In a letter to Mr. Holton, in 1863, Mr. Brown said, "An immense card, politically, would be a renewal of the United States Reciprocity Treaty. If you can fix that for twenty years, you will give our party a hold on the farmers that will be very difficult to over-estimate."¹ A year afterwards he wrote again to Mr. Holton: "I am much concerned about the Reciprocity Treaty. It appears to me that none of us are sufficiently awake about it. I see very serious trouble ahead if notice of the repeal is given. Such a feeling will be manifested here as will determine the United States to repeal it. They will see then, if they do not now, how essential it is to our prosperity here in Canada, and what many here are prepared to do to secure its re-enactment."²

It is manifest, therefore, that although Mr. Brown withdrew from the Coalition Government rather than countenance the scheme of concurrent legislation, he set a high value upon the Treaty of 1854, and was eager for its renewal, or for the negotiation

¹ Mackenzie's "Life of George Brown," page 206.

² Mackenzie's "Life of George Brown," page 208.

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of some similar arrangement with the United States. Mr. Brown was authorized by the Government to offer a limited reciprocity in manufactures, and an unlimited reciprocity in natural products, and also to pledge Canada to deepen the canals in return for reciprocity in the coasting trade. There was, however, to be no discrimination against Great Britain, and the schedule of manufactures was to cover only "articles not produced in or exported from Great Britain to this country, together with such other articles as the Imperial and Dominion Governments may eventually agree upon, or as may by mutual arrangement be entered at a fixed duty to be specified in the treaty." Sir Edward Thornton and Mr. Brown laboured with admirable tact and diligence to effect an arrangement under these conditions, and at length a draft treaty for twenty-one years was framed by the joint negotiators. It was in the main a generous and statesmanlike adjustment of the commercial relations between the two countries. The draft treaty put lumber and coal and all farm products on the free list, and struck off the duties from agricultural implements, axles, boots and shoes, boot and shoe-making machines; buffalo robes, cotton grain bags, cotton denims, cotton jeans, unbleached; cotton drillings, unbleached; cotton plaids, cotton ticking, cotton-ades, unbleached; cabinet-ware and furniture; felt covering for boilers; gutta percha belting and tubing; carriages, carts, waggon, and other wheeled

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vehicles and sleighs; fire-engines; iron—bar, hoop, pig, puddled, rod, sheet, or scrap; iron nails, spikes, bolts, tacks, brads, or springs; iron castings; India rubber belting and tubing; locomotives for railways, or parts thereof; lead, sheet or pig; leather, sole or upper; leather, harness and saddlery; mill or factory or steamboat fixed engines and machines, or parts thereof; manufactures of marble, stone, slate or granite; manufactures of wood solely, or of wood nailed, bound, hinged, or locked with metal materials; mangles, washing machines, wringing machines, and drying machines; printing paper; paper-making machines; printing-type, presses and folders, paper cutters, ruling machines, page numbering machines, and stereotyping and electrotyping apparatus; refrigerators; satinets of wool and cotton; steam engines; railroad cars, carriages and trucks; steel, wrought or cast, and steel plates and rails; tin tubes and piping; tweeds, of wool solely, and water-wheel machines and apparatus.

Canada also undertook to concede the free use of the fisheries for twenty-one years; to abandon the arbitration then proceeding under the Washington Treaty; to enlarge the Welland and St. Lawrence canals; and to construct the Caughnawaga and Whitehall canals. It was further agreed that each country should enjoy equal rights in the coasting-trade of the inland lakes and of the St. Lawrence River; to concede to each on equal terms the use of the Canadian, New York, and Michigan canals;

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to admit vessels built in either country to all the advantages of registry in the other; to organize a joint commission to secure the efficient lighting of the inland waters common to both countries; and finally to appoint a joint commission to promote the protection and propagation of fish in such waters. It was also provided that the manufactures covered by the treaty should be subject to a sliding scale, under which the imposts were to be reduced by one-third each year until complete abolition was effected.¹

This was a liberal and comprehensive arrangement, and it seems impossible to argue that it gave the balance of advantage to Canada. Naturally, the manufacturers' schedule aroused serious opposition

¹ The article of the proposed treaty which meets most opposition on this side is that which provides for the gradual extinction of duties on the manufactures which it is proposed to make free between Canada and the United States, after the 30th June, 1877. During the fiscal year ending June, 1876, each country would be entitled to charge two-thirds of its present duty; the next year one-third. To start with, the inequality of the duties is very great—say 17 to 50, for illustration and not as an exact comparison—and the proposal for gradually extinguishing them continues the disproportion. Many fear that during this period of transition, American manufacturers would gain control of our market, and extinguish our young and struggling manufactures by the aid of this discriminating duty; and this fear cannot be regarded as idle or groundless. The existing inequality would be greatly aggravated. The American manufacturers can almost command our markets at present; if the duties be lowered on our side, without an equal chance of competition being given in their market, there is much reason to fear the effect of three years' discrimination against our infant manufactures would be fatal. This is, beyond all doubt, a very serious feature of the proposed treaty.—*The Nation*, July 9th, 1874.

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in this country, and there was keen and powerful criticism of the magnitude of the engagements assumed by Canada under the draft treaty. The manufacturing and mercantile interests strongly opposed the arrangement, while the shipping interest was divided. In the East the failure to secure reciprocity in the Atlantic coasting trade caused grave dissatisfaction. The Dominion Board of Trade, by a vote of twenty-seven to six, declared that the privileges conceded were greater than the privileges obtained. A convention of manufacturers at Hamilton pronounced against the treaty. They objected to the arrangement on the ground that it was a departure from the policy for many years maintained in Canada of encouraging home industries, which policy was almost unanimously upheld by both the agricultural and commercial interests, as well as by the manufacturing interests. Should the treaty go into operation it would bring about a social and commercial crisis, attended with ruin to many. The admission of both English and American goods into Canada free of duty would have a serious effect on many industries, close up many manufacturing establishments, reduce the population, contract the general trade of the country, and affect inevitably agricultural as well as commercial interests.

The sliding scale was denounced, and it was represented that the effect of the treaty would be to reduce the cost of production in the United

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States and to increase the cost of production in Canada, thereby destroying the advantages which Canada possessed in cheapness of manufacturing. If there should be serious loss of revenue from the admission free of goods from both England and the United States while we were involved in heavy expenditures for public works, to which we were already pledged, heavy direct taxation would be inevitable. This would be a hardship to the agricultural population far more than counterbalancing any benefits which could be derived from the treaty. While it was desirable to improve our canals to such extent as was practicable, it was a rash undertaking to be bound by treaty to this obligation, without regard to contingencies, especially as the American Government engaged merely to make recommendations to the authorities of certain States in support of reciprocal privileges in American canals. The American patent laws would come between the manufacturers of Canada and those of the United States, and many Canadian manufacturers would find themselves as effectually excluded from the American market by these laws as by prohibitory duties levied at the custom house. Certain clauses of the treaty were open to conflicting interpretations, and these doubtful points would be construed by the American Government in favour of its own citizens and against foreigners. The Caughnawaga canal would tend to divert trade from the St. Lawrence to Boston and New York,

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and thereby increase the cost of freight to and from our seaboard ports, and cripple and diminish our direct trade with other countries. The treaty, in short, would cause a great disturbance of business generally, weaken the manufacturing interests, seriously injure the farmers' home market, and bring loss upon merchants through the failure of accustomed markets and non-employment of many persons.¹

But there was still a great body of opinion in favour of the arrangement, and its acceptance at Washington would have strengthened the Mackenzie Administration, and perhaps averted the protectionist movement which carried the Conservative leaders back to office. The draft treaty was not even considered by Congress. The message with which President Grant sent the draft to the Senate was guarded and inconclusive. The President said, "The Plenipotentiaries of Her Britannic Majesty at Washington have submitted to the Secretary of State for my consideration a draft of a treaty for the reciprocal regulation of the commerce and trade between the United States and Canada, with provisions for the enlargement of the Canadian canals and for their use by United States vessels on terms of equality with British vessels. I am of the opinion that a proper treaty for such purposes would result beneficially for the United States. It

¹ See report of the meeting of the Ontario Industrial Association at Hamilton, August 12th-13th, 1874.

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would not only open or enlarge markets for our products, but it would increase the facilities of transportation from the grain-growing States of the West to the seaboard. The proposed draft has many features to commend it to our favourable consideration, but whether it makes all the concessions which could justly be required of Great Britain, or whether it calls for more concessions from the United States than we should yield I am not prepared to say. Among the provisions are articles proposing to dispense with the arbitration respecting the fisheries, which was provided for by the Treaty of Washington, in the event of the conclusion and ratification of a treaty and the passage of all the legislation necessary to enforce it. These provisions, as well as other considerations, make it desirable that this subject should receive attention before the close of the present session. I therefore express an earnest wish that the Senate may be able to consider and determine before the adjournment of Congress whether it will give its constitutional concurrence to the conclusion of a treaty with Great Britain for the purposes already named, either in such form as is proposed by the British Plenipotentiaries or in such other more acceptable form as the Senate may prefer.”¹ The draft treaty reached the Senate only two days before adjournment. It was taken up in secret session and returned to the President with the advice that it was inexpedient to proceed with

¹ Special message of President Grant to Congress, June 18th, 1874.

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its consideration. Thus the measure died on the threshold of Congress, and it was to know no resurrection. The abrupt and inconsiderate action of the Senate was resented in Canada, and was one among the many reasons which led the Canadian people to accept the policy of protection and to welcome the increase of duties on American products.

Sir John Macdonald was always conscious of the strength of Canadian feeling for reciprocal trade relations with the United States. No one was less disposed than the Conservative leader to undervalue the treaty of 1854. He had said in 1860 that one great cause of the prosperity of the farmer in Upper Canada was the Reciprocity Treaty and the consequent interchange of agricultural commodities and raw materials. He said years afterwards that the Government which negotiated the treaty had done an important service to Canada. He was more than willing when the Washington Treaty was under negotiation to yield the fisheries for reciprocal trade privileges. The question was adroitly handled by the Conservative politicians during the protectionist campaign. The argument for protection was associated with the desire for reciprocity. A national policy of protection, said Sir John Macdonald's resolution of 1878, "will prevent Canada from being made a sacrifice market, will encourage and develop an active interprovincial trade, and moving as it ought to do, in the direction of

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reciprocity of tariffs with our neighbours so far as the varied interests of Canada may demand, will greatly tend to procure for this country eventually reciprocity of trade.”¹ In a speech made at Simcoe on September 27th, 1876, he declared that he was in favour of “reciprocal free trade” if it could be obtained, but that so long as the United States closed their markets to Canada we should consult only our own interests.² This was the keynote of a spirited and sagacious campaign, and there is hardly any doubt that thousands of farmers accepted protection in the hope that increase of Canadian duties would incline the statesmen at Washington to seek a reciprocity arrangement with the British provinces. The temper of Washington, however, was otherwise affected, and for many years thereafter there was no serious negotiation for better commercial intercourse between the two countries. The Canadian tariff of 1879 embodied the standing offer of reciprocity in natural products, but no one expected that any such limited arrangement would be accepted by the United States. In 1880 Congressman Cox, of New York, then chairman of the House Committee on foreign affairs, reported a bill for the appointment of a commission to consider trade relations between Canada and the Republic, but it was not adopted. Here, as at Washington,

¹ Hansard, March 7th, 1878, page 854.

² Lieut.-Col. J. P. Macpherson's "Life of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. II., page 215.

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reciprocity of tariffs seemed to be accepted as the settled commercial policy, and for a time the argument for reciprocity of trade was a very minor feature of the sustained Liberal attack upon the system of protection.¹

¹ The Montreal *Star* Almanac for 1897 has a compact and comprehensive review of trade negotiations between Canada and the United States from 1854 to 1892 by Mr. A. H. U. Colquhoun.

CHAPTER XX

TRADE AND THE FISHERIES

IT was in connection with the fisheries that the question of Reciprocity was revived. If Canadians have always sought access to the markets of the United States, the American Government has been just as anxious to secure fishing privileges in British waters. On the Atlantic coast, by treaty, by agreement, and in part by custom, American fishermen had from the time of the Declaration of Independence certain privileges. By the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, Americans were allowed to fish on the grand bank and other banks of Newfoundland, and were permitted to dry and cure fish in the unsettled bays, harbours, and creeks of Nova Scotia so long as these remained unsettled. Privileges were also conferred to take and cure fish on certain well-defined portions of the British North American coast. The Treaty of Versailles was annulled by the war of 1812, and under the Treaty of Ghent of 1814 there were no provisions for the participation of Americans in the North Atlantic fisheries. In 1818, a treaty was negotiated under which the Americans practically surrendered the inshore fisheries south of the Strait of Belle Isle. Many disputes arose as to the proper interpretation of the clauses

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of this treaty which forbade the Americans to enter bays and harbours except for the purpose of repairs, and for procuring wood and water; and as to whether the word bay meant all bays, including the Bay of Fundy and the Bay of Chalcurs, as claimed by Nova Scotia, or whether American vessels should be excluded only from bays that were less than six miles wide at the mouth. In effect, the Americans claimed the right of fishing anywhere except within three miles from the land, while Nova Scotia claimed that the line should be drawn from headland to headland, no matter how wide the bay might be, and that fishing should not be carried on within three miles from the coast line as so defined.

In 1845, the British Government, while insisting upon its right to exclude American fishermen from all bays, relaxed that right so far as the Bay of Fundy was concerned. The question, however, continued to be one of great difficulty, and there were many infractions of the three mile limit. By the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 the trouble was ended for a time, and fishing vessels of the United States were permitted to enter British North American ports on the same terms as British fishing vessels. This treaty, as we have seen, was terminated in 1866 at the instance of the United States, and in consequence the privileges of American fishermen in the Canadian inshore fisheries ceased, and the Treaty of 1818 was revived.

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But whenever a treaty is denounced or a treaty rejected at Washington, Canada is forced to make conciliatory arrangements, and to accept sacrificial compromises in order to temper American opinion and preserve international good neighbourhood. In this case it was agreed between the Canadian and Imperial authorities that, on payment of a license fee of \$1.00 per ton, Americans should continue to fish in Canadian waters until some more satisfactory settlement could be effected. For a few years the fee was paid by many of the American fishermen, and then gradually the regulation was ignored, payments discontinued, and the fishing grounds occupied as freely and boldly by unlicensed Americans as by the fishermen of Canada. Hence the necessity for the negotiation of the Treaty of Washington. But unfortunately for Canada the settlement of the claims of the United States against Great Britain for losses inflicted upon American commerce by Confederate cruisers fitted out in British ports during the civil war, rather than the protection of Canadian fishing interests, was the main concern of the British negotiators; and the preservation of good relations with the United States, even at the expense of Canada, was the determined policy of the Home Government. The story of the negotiations is well told in Sir John Macdonald's private correspondence, which forms the most pregnant chapters in Mr. Pope's life of the Conservative statesman, and forever

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vindicates him from the charge of recreancy to Canadian interests.¹

The essential terms of the treaty as finally settled provided for the free admission into the United States of salt-water fish as a partial equivalent for the free access of American fishing vessels to the Canadian fisheries; the concession to the United States of the free navigation of the St. Lawrence in return for the free use of Lake Michigan and the rivers Yukon, Stikine, and Porcupine in Alaska; and an agreement to determine by arbitration the value of the Canadian fisheries in excess of the privileges conceded by the United States. In consequence of the failure in the Senate of the draft treaty of reciprocity negotiated by Mr. Brown and Sir Edward Thornton, this arbitration became necessary, and the result was an award in favour of Canada and Newfoundland for \$5,500,000, for twelve years use of the inshore fisheries as the excess value of our fisheries to the United States above the American concessions under the treaty. This result was not well received at Washington, and in the general opinion of the American press and of American politicians, represented an excessive valuation of the Canadian fisheries. It was inevitable that the clauses of the treaty under which the award was made would not be accepted by the American authorities as a per-

¹ Joseph Pope's "Memoirs of Sir John Macdonald," Vol. II., pages 85-140.

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manent arrangement, and in 1885, in consonance with American opinion, they were terminated by Congress. This threw Canada back upon the convention of 1818, and the Canadian Government entered upon a vigorous enforcement of the terms of the treaty. American vessels were not allowed to fish within the three mile limit, nor to tranship cargoes of fish in Canadian ports, nor to enter such ports for any purpose except for shelter, wood, water, and repairs. Not a few American vessels were seized, some were condemned, and all craft seeking to poach upon the Canadian fishing grounds were vexed and harassed by the Government cruisers. There was some opinion in Canada that the operations of the protective fleet were unnecessarily spirited, and in the United States there was harsh characterization of the treaty of 1818, and angry denunciation of the policy of the Canadian authorities. It was contended that the spirit of the old treaty was harsh, coercive, and unneighbourly; that its provisions were repugnant to the relations which should exist between friendly communities, and represented the temper of a barbaric era; and that Canada's attitude was aggressive, defiant, and obnoxious to the prestige and dignity of the United States. There is no doubt the situation was full of danger, and that at any moment an accidental unlawful seizure, or the sacrifice of life in some petty quarrel between a fishing vessel and a Canadian cruiser might bring Great Brit-

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ain and the United States to the very verge of hostilities.

The action of President Cleveland under the circumstances was praiseworthy and statesmanlike. In his first message to Congress he said: "In the interest of good neighbourhood and of the commercial intercourse of adjacent communities, the question of the North American fisheries is one of much importance;" and he therefore recommended that "Congress provide for the appointment of a commission, in which the Governments of the United States and Great Britain shall be respectively represented, charged with the consideration and settlement upon a just and equitable basis of the entire question of the fishing rights of the two Governments and their respective citizens on the coasts of the United States and British North America." He added: "The fishing interests being intimately related to other general questions dependent upon contiguity and intercourse, consideration thereof in all their equities might also properly come within the purview of such a commission, and the fullest latitude of expression on both sides should be permitted."¹ The President's recommendations were rejected by Congress, and, therefore, in his second annual message he returned to the subject. He now intimated that negotiations had been instituted with the British Government

¹ President Cleveland's first annual message to Congress, Dec. 8th, 1885.

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for such joint interpretation and definition of the article of the Convention of 1818, relating to the territorial waters and inshore fisheries of the British provinces, as should secure the Canadian rights from encroachment by United States fishermen, and at the same time insure the enjoyment by the latter of the privileges guaranteed to them by the convention. He said that while he was unfeignedly desirous that good relations should exist between the United States and the inhabitants of Canada, "yet the action of their officials during the past season toward our fishermen has been such as to seriously threaten their continuance."¹ Two days later, in a special message, he recommended that "a commission be authorized by law to take perpetuating proofs of the losses sustained during the past year by American fishermen, owing to their unfriendly and unwarranted treatment by the local authorities of the Maritime Provinces of the Dominion of Canada."²

But Congress, the bane of negotiations with the United States, responsive to organized interests and sensitive to popular clamour, ordered a more heroic settlement, and on March 3rd, 1887, passed a retaliatory act which provided that whenever the President should be satisfied that American vessels were illegally, unjustly, or vexatiously restricted or harassed in the exercise of their business,

¹ Message to Congress, Dec. 6th, 1886.

² Special message to Congress, Dec. 8th, 1886.

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or denied the privileges accorded to the most favoured nation in respect to touching or trading by the authorities of the British North American Dominions, he might, by proclamation, close the ports and waters of the United States against the vessels and products of all or any part of the British provinces. Under all the circumstances this was mischievous and ungenerous, and the action of Congress naturally excited apprehension in Great Britain and indignation in Canada. If Mr. Cleveland had stood less firm and resolute we should have had commercial war at once, and actual war in the near distance. But the President refused to exercise the power put into his hands by the retaliatory act of Congress, and arranged with Great Britain for the appointment of a commission to adjust points of dispute under the treaty of 1818, and for a more satisfactory settlement of the relations between Canada and the United States.

The British commissioners appointed to conduct this negotiation were Sir Lionel Sackville-West, Sir Charles Tupper, and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. As in 1871 and 1874, Canada sought to associate the question of reciprocal trade with the question of the fisheries. On July 1st, 1885, the fishery clauses of the treaty of Washington were terminated, and at once fish-oil and fish of all kinds which had passed free into the United States became subject to customs duties, although the Canadian Govern-

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ment generously agreed to extend to American vessels the fishing privileges enjoyed under the treaty until the close of the season. This *modus vivendi*, according to the correspondence between the British Minister at Washington and Mr. Bayard, Secretary of State, was reached with the understanding that, "The agreement has been arrived at under circumstances affording prospect of negotiation for development and extension of trade between the United States and British North America." Mr. Foster, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, in a report to the Privy Council of June 14th, 1886, in explanation and defence of the right of Canada to enforce the provisions of the London Convention, said: "The undersigned would express the hope that the discussion which has arisen in this question may lead to renewed negotiations between Great Britain and the United States, and may have the result of establishing extended trade relations between the Republic and Canada, and of removing all sources of irritation between the two countries."¹ It is declared in a report of the Privy Council of February 1st, 1887, that the Government of Canada was not only ready to consent to the appointment of a commission to determine the limits of the territorial waters within which, subject to the treaty of 1818, the exclusive right of fishing belonged to Great Britain, but also to enter into such other arrangements as would extend the

¹ Correspondence relative to the Fisheries Question, 1885-87, page 84.

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commercial relations existing between the two countries.¹

The Blue Book also gives an interesting unofficial correspondence between Mr. Bayard and Sir Charles Tupper. The American Secretary of State, in a letter to the Canadian Minister, dated May 31st, 1887, said: "I am confident that we both seek to attain a just and permanent settlement, and there is but one way to procure it, and that is by a straightforward treatment on a liberal and statesmanlike plan of the entire commercial relations of the two countries. I feel we stand at 'the parting of the ways.' In one direction I can see a well-assured, steady, healthful relationship, devoid of petty jealousies and filled with the fruits of a prosperity arising out of a friendship cemented by mutual interests, and enduring because based upon justice; on the other, a career of embittered rivalries, staining our long frontier with the hues of hostility, in which victory means the destruction of an adjacent prosperity without gain to the prevalent party—a mutual physical and moral deterioration which ought to be abhorrent to patriots on both sides, and which I am sure no two men will exert themselves more to prevent than the parties to this unofficial correspondence." Sir Charles Tupper said in reply that he "entirely concurred in the statement that the one way to attain a just and permanent settlement was by a straightforward

¹ Correspondence relative to the Fisheries Question, 1885-87, page 218.

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treatment on a liberal and statesmanlike plan of the entire commercial relations of the two countries.”¹

Accordingly, at an early stage of the negotiations, Sir Charles Tupper submitted a proposition for an adjustment of the questions at issue on the basis of freer and wider trade relations. He proposed that, “with the view of removing all causes of difference in connection with the fisheries,” the fishermen of both countries should have all the privileges enjoyed during the existence of the fishery articles of the treaty of Washington, in consideration of a mutual arrangement providing for greater freedom of commercial intercourse between the United States and Canada and Newfoundland. The proposition was rejected by the American Plenipotentiaries. They said that only Congress could remove customs duties; that on account of the inhospitable conduct of Canada towards American fishermen, the Senate and House of Representatives had authorized the President to declare non-intercourse with the British provinces; and that their representatives would never purchase immunity for their fishermen by reciprocal trade arrangements, and particularly while they entertained the conviction that Canada had adopted an aggressive and unneighbourly policy in order to force reciprocity upon the United States.²

¹ Correspondence relative to the Fisheries Question, 1887-88, pages 60-61.

² Speech of Sir Charles Tupper in the House of Commons, April 10th, 1888.

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We cannot know what measure of continental free trade Sir Charles Tupper contemplated. There was an impression at the time that he was prepared to agree to a more liberal reciprocity treaty than suited many of the Conservatives in Parliament. During the debate on the address in the House of Commons in 1899, Sir Wilfrid Laurier declared that Sir Charles Tupper was the only Canadian, so far as he knew, who in negotiation with the Americans had "offered to barter away certain privileges on the basis of unrestricted reciprocity." Sir Charles Tupper denied that he had made an offer of unrestricted reciprocity, but practically admitted that he had made an "unrestricted offer of reciprocity;" and this Sir Wilfrid Laurier interpreted as "reciprocity without restriction."¹ It is safe to say that the Canadian Government would have consented to a generous reciprocal arrangement; and as the Liberals had now made reciprocity the main feature of their programme, the extreme protectionists in the Conservative party would have had no option but to accept whatever agreement Sir Charles Tupper might make at Washington.

The treaty, however, as finally drafted, contained no provisions for wider commercial intercourse. The instrument defined the limit between the inshore and deep sea fisheries so as to exclude American vessels from all bays ten miles wide at the mouth, and expressly shut out American fisher-

¹ Hansard, March 21st, 1899. pages 102-103.

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men from certain bays ranging from fifteen to twenty miles in width at the mouth, such as the Bay of Chaleurs, Fortune Bay, and St. Anne's Bay. Free navigation of the Strait of Canso was conceded to all fishing vessels of the United States, and permission was given to American vessels under stress of weather or accident to unload, re-load, tranship or sell in Canadian ports subject to customs laws and regulations. Pending the ratification of the treaty, a *modus vivendi* was arranged providing that upon payment of a license fee of \$1.50 per ton American fishing vessels might enter the bays and harbours of Canada and Newfoundland to purchase supplies, tranship their catch, and ship crews. There were also provisions for reciprocity in fish and fish products, but these were not actually embodied in the treaty, and were dependent upon concurrent legislation by Congress and by the Canadian Parliament.

President Cleveland, in his message of February 20th, 1888, recommending the treaty to the Senate, said: "The treaty now submitted contains no provisions affecting tariff duties, and, independently of the position assumed upon the part of the United States that no alteration in our tariff or other domestic legislation could be made as the price or consideration of obtaining the rights of our citizens secured by treaty, it was considered more expedient to allow any change in the revenue laws of the United States to be made by the ordinary exercise

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of legislative will and in the promotion of the public interests. Therefore, the addition to the free list of fish, fish-oil, whale and seal-oil, etc., recited in the last article of the treaty, is wholly left to the action of Congress; and in connection therewith the Canadian and Newfoundland right to regulate sales of bait and other fishing supplies within their own jurisdiction is recognized, and the right of our fishermen to freely purchase these things is made contingent by this treaty upon the action of Congress in the modification of our tariff laws." He said further that, "The treaty now submitted to you has been framed in a spirit of liberal equity and reciprocal benefits, in the conviction that mutual advantage and convenience are the only permanent foundation of peace and friendship between states, and that with the adoption of the agreement now placed before the Senate, a beneficial and satisfactory intercourse between the two countries will be established, so as to secure perpetual peace and harmony." But the Senate rejected even this liberal and beneficial agreement; and, during all the years that have since elapsed, American fishing vessels have been licensed and permitted to purchase supplies and tranship their catch in Canadian waters, and Canada, in the interests of international comity and good neighbourhood, has foregone great and undoubted rights under the London Convention. The treaty was ratified by the Parliament of Canada, and was not directly challenged by the

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Liberal party. It was argued by the press and the spokesmen of the party that adequate concessions had not been received from the United States, and that the spirit which the Government had manifested in the enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty of 1818 was calculated to inflame American opinion, and determine Congress to reject all proposals for freer commercial intercourse. Mr. Laurier stated the policy of the Opposition in these words: "We will adopt this treaty because it is the best thing which can be obtained under the circumstances, because it puts an end to the state of things which has been created by the policy of gentlemen on the other side, and because it paves the way to obtain those trade relations which the whole people of Canada desire."¹

In 1889, Mr. Laurier moved an amendment to supply declaring that, in view of the rejection of the treaty by the United States Senate, and the unfortunate and regrettable differences existing between Canada and the United States on the fishery and trade questions, steps should be taken by the Government for the satisfactory adjustment of such differences, and the securing of unrestricted freedom in the trade relations of the two countries; that in any negotiations entered upon for such purposes Canada should be directly represented by some one nominated by its Government; and that in the meantime, and to afford evidence of the

¹ Hansard, April 16th, 1888, page 854.

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anxious desire of Canada to promote good feeling and to remove all possible subjects of controversy, the *modus vivendi*, proposed on behalf of the British Government to the Government of the United States with respect to the fisheries, should be continued in operation during the ensuing fishing season.¹ The motion was rejected. The *modus vivendi* continues, and better trade relations have not been established. Upon the whole, the treaty of 1888 was a prudent and comprehensive settlement of delicate and difficult questions, conceived in a spirit of generous regard for international obligations, and of statesmanlike recognition of the supreme importance of good relations between Great Britain and the United States; and, if the spirit which animated Ottawa and Westminster had been reciprocated at Washington, the treaty would have gone into effect, and at least one great step would have been taken towards the realization of Mr. Bayard's vision of "a well-assured, steady, healthful relationship, devoid of petty jealousies, and filled with the fruits of a prosperity arising out of a friendship cemented by mutual interests, and enduring because based upon justice."²

¹ Hansard, February 26th, 1889, page 328.

² The late Sir John Bourinot's "British Rule in Canada" has an instructive chapter on treaty negotiations between Canada and the United States; and Mr. Thomas Hodgins' "British and American Diplomacy affecting Canada, 1782-1899," is a careful, scholarly, and comprehensive review of the international relations of the two countries.

CHAPTER XXI

COMMERCIAL UNION

DURING 1887, the agitation for "Commercial Union" with the United States made substantial headway, particularly in Ontario, and commanded the services of some powerful and distinguished advocates. The controversy was keen and bitter, the note of continentalism had distinct utterance, and it may be that the movement bred annexationist sentiment. But it is not at all clear that political union with the United States was the avowed or even the secret object of the chief spokesmen of the movement; and certainly political union was distasteful to the mass of Canadians who accepted the policy as the only practicable basis of freer trade with the neighbouring country.

Conditions were peculiarly favourable to the propagation of the theories of the commercial unionists. Trade was depressed. Prices of agricultural products were low and tending downward. The ratio of settlement in the North-West was unsatisfactory. The home market had not expanded in sympathy with the increase of manufacturing establishments. There was serious interprovincial discord rising out of the execution of Riel and the effervescence of French nationalism in Quebec. Sectarian feeling in

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Ontario was excited by attacks upon the separate school system, and the use of the French language in the schools of the French districts. The American Congress was threatening non-intercourse in revenge for Canada's enforcement of the provisions of the Treaty of 1818. All the counter-tendencies and inherent difficulties of our situation were emphasized and exaggerated to serve the particular purposes of eager sectarians and warring factions. It was a time of gloom and doubt, of suspicion and unrest, of rash opinion and premature judgment, of failing faith in our institutions, of hostile examination of the central props and pillars of the national edifice.

Such experiences are not uncommon in the evolution of free communities. Nations are of slow growth, and a common sentiment and community of interest are seldom the immediate product of a political alliance and a constitution. The birth of the American union was through revolution, but even in those fires an enduring national principle was not generated. During the war of 1812 the country was rent by faction, and whole communities trembled on the verge of resistance to the executive authority. Fifteen or twenty years later, the nullification movement swept over the South, and the planter States drifted to the edge of revolt. Then came years of fretting and irritation, and at last the desperate crisis of the rebellion; and it is only now in the conquered South that a genuine

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patriotism has supplanted the narrower idea of State sovereignty. We have within the Canadian Confederation a vast stretch of territory, and serious natural and economic hindrances to the harmonious growth of a common sentiment. We have had a strenuous race rivalry and an enduring creed quarrel. We have had slow growth of population, long neglect of our wealth of mine, and field, and forest, wide ignorance of the temper of our climate and the extent of our productive territory, and, beyond all, the irresistible competition of the United States for the world's notice, the world's people, and the world's capital. It is not surprising, therefore, that we have had periods of gloom and discouragement, and that now and then counsels of despair have influenced considerable elements of our population. We caught sometimes the note of despair in the campaign of the commercial unionists, and sometimes a tone of contempt for deeply cherished sentiments which seriously prejudiced the movement.

Among the chief organizers and promoters of this agitation were Mr. Henry W. Darling, then president of the Toronto Board of Trade; Mr. Goldwin Smith, the eminent historian and scholar; Mr. Valancey E. Fuller, of Wentworth, president of the Council of Farmers' Institutes; Mr. Erastus Wiman, of New York; and Congressman Butterworth, of Ohio. When Congress passed the Non-Intercourse Act in protest against Canada's active enforcement of the London Convention, Mr. Butterworth

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submitted to the House of Representatives a bill for the settlement of all outstanding questions between the two countries on the basis of a Zollverein. It is not unlikely that Mr. Butterworth acted at the instance of Mr. Wiman; and we have the statement of Sir Charles Tupper that it was at the suggestion of Mr. Wiman that he visited Washington and opened the negotiations which led to the appointment of the Fisheries Commission.¹

Mr. Wiman was a Canadian by birth, and in his early years a successful journalist. He removed to New York, established important commercial enterprises, and at length was seized with the large and honourable ambition to improve the relations between the land of his birth and the land of his adoption. He had, however, never renounced his British citizenship; and there is fair evidence that he laboured, whether wisely or unwisely, not to change the political relations, but to better the commercial relations between Canada and the United States. With much vigour of pen and tongue and some originality of method, he pressed Mr. Butterworth's bill upon Congress, and at intervals came to Canada and addressed many meetings in favour of commercial union. Mr. Wiman was a fluent and persuasive speaker, he had thoroughly mastered the economic relationships of the two

¹ Speech of Sir Charles Tupper in the House of Commons on the Fisheries Treaty, April 10th, 1888.

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countries, and rarely revealed the economist's contempt for popular sympathies and popular prejudices. Still, it is doubtful if his advocacy was particularly effective in either country. He was prejudiced in the United States by his failure to accept American citizenship, and prejudiced in Canada by the fact of residence in New York, and natural identification with the commercial interests of the Republic.

In Canada, Mr. Goldwin Smith was the active and dominant spirit of the movement. His eminence in the world of letters, the elegance of his written word, his breadth of historical vision and luminous exposition of the teaching of the economists, invested his advocacy with singular charm and effectiveness. But Mr. Goldwin Smith is not always a faithful interpreter of Canadian sentiment. The Canadian people reverence his learning, respect his courage, and honour his integrity; but his persistent assertion of unpopular opinions, and stubborn fidelity to the denationalizing creed of the Manchester economists, have minimized his influence and circumscribed his authority in Canada.

The commercial unionists had a powerful organ in the *Toronto Mail*, and for a time the *Toronto Globe* gave active and influential support to the movement. A Commercial Union League was formed, with Mr. Goldwin Smith as president and Mr. G. Mercer Adam as secretary, and active steps were taken to organize branches and influence

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opinion throughout the country, It was felt that the movement would gather its main strength in the agricultural communities, and the Farmers' Institutes were one of the first points of attack. At the annual meeting of the representatives of these Institutes at Toronto on April 28th, 1887, a manifesto was presented from Mr. Wiman and a resolution adopted declaring for the removal of trade restrictions between Canada and the United States either by reciprocity or commercial union; and asking in the event of failure to effect a satisfactory arrangement with the Republic, that Great Britain should be petitioned to impose differential duties in favour of colonial food products. The assent to an American Zollverein was rather more indefinite and guarded than the commercial unionists desired, but it gave standing ground to the advocates of the new movement, and a nucleus of achievement to the agitation. Many of the Institutes throughout the province passed similar resolutions, and the columns of *The Mail* and *The Globe* became crowded with interviews with representative farmers, merchants, and manufacturers, in definite advocacy of commercial union.

As early as March 1st, *The Mail* gave comfort and countenance to the agitation. Discussing the increasing tension between the two countries on the subject of the Atlantic fisheries, and the menace of retaliation from Washington, *The Mail* said: "A customs union is favoured as a basis of settle-

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ment by Mr. Bayard, by leading men in Congress, and by the principal American journals without exception. That it would benefit Canada is a fact which no one that we know of . . . has ever doubted. The only objection to it from this side of the line is that it might endanger British connection; but let us seriously ask ourselves if a people situated as we are in this controversy can afford to be swayed by sentiment." Two months later, in discussing the same question, *The Mail* said: "The Americans are willing to treat us fairly; and let us not forget that were we dealing with sixty millions of Frenchmen or Russians we should probably not be consulted at all on the subject. Should it be found necessary, in order to reach a settlement with the Americans, still further to alter our relations with the Mother Country—to demand the right, for instance, to let American goods in free, whilst maintaining our high duties against her—we must face the question like men. Having ceased to protect us, or rather having been relieved by our action of the duty of protecting us, England cannot very well object to our protecting ourselves by the only means within our reach."¹ Two months later still, *The Mail* accepted the new issue in blunt and uncompromising fashion. We read: "The movement in favour of reciprocity has originated, we firmly believe, as much in a patriotic desire to preserve the integrity of Confederation as from the more

¹ *Toronto Mail*, April 26th, 1887.

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material consideration of dollars and cents. At any rate, reciprocity is the only available, if not the only conceivable remedy for the disease which has attacked the extremities of the country; and so soon as the people of Ontario reach the conclusion that it would also be a good thing for them, the advocates of commercial isolation may as well stand aside.”¹

On September 2nd, *The Mail* pronounced unequivocally for the adjustment of the Fisheries’ dispute and the settlement of the future commercial relations of the United States and the British provinces on the basis of a Zollverein. “Reciprocity,” *The Mail* now said, “is the only conceivable basis of settlement; but not the reciprocity of 1854, which gave us the American market for our natural products, while it excluded American manufactures from Canada. The reciprocity proffered this time will be commercial union; and we repeat that in a matter of such vital concern to the people of Canada, they should be permitted to speak their mind before the case is irrevocably closed. If there is anything in universal experience, the throwing down of the tariff wall between the two countries could not fail to benefit both. The opponents of the measure cannot point to a single instance where good has not resulted to adjoining countries from freeing commerce. All they can do is to conjure up *a priori* objections which have come to grief in

¹ *Toronto Mail*, June 29th, 1887.

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every instance without exception where free intercourse has been substituted for customs barriers; and to tell us, they who are clapping prohibitory taxes on British staples without a qualm, that commercial union would be disloyal to the Mother Country. . . . In any event, the Canadian people should be allowed to express themselves upon the offer. It is no use continuing to boast of responsible government if our higher politics are to be regulated by a board over which we have no control."

The Globe was not less definite in its acceptance of commercial union, and quite as active in its advocacy of the new policy. It could claim no official authority to speak for the Liberal party, but it was recognized as the leading Liberal journal, and it was, perhaps, natural that the Conservative press should hold the party leaders responsible for its utterances. The truth is, however, that the Liberal Opposition in Parliament had not pronounced upon the question, and there was slight ground for the assumption that the project of commercial union would be accepted by a party caucus. Many of the influential counsellors of the party opposed commercial union from the first, and there was a rooted objection among Liberals as among Conservatives to any tariff system that would discriminate against British imports. *The Globe*, however, then considered that the advantages of a Zollverein would outweigh the objections to such an arrangement, and in the issue of April

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27th, 1887, we find a clear and comprehensive statement of its position. "If," said *The Globe*, "commercial union between Canada and the United States is, as we believe, consistent with either the political connection of Canada and Great Britain, or the political independence of Canada, then there can be no sentimental argument against it. On the contrary, all sound sentiment is for it. A great service would be rendered to Great Britain by a trade arrangement that would remove all causes of dispute between Canada and the States. Who can argue that there would be any more offense to loyalty in trading across a line free of custom houses than across one adorned every few miles with these obstacles to business? Closer trade relations with the States could not occur without yielding new profits to Canadians, and to obtain larger profits under existing political institutions would tend to conserve them. The only temptation to annexation is that which arises from existing restraints upon reciprocal trade. Canada, if commercially united with the States and politically with Great Britain, would be a living link of friendship between the greater communities. Such a situation would be novel, but not at all impracticable. Its establishment would give permanent peace to North America, and be a long step to that loose confederation of all English-speaking communities which is the noblest project of the soundest sentimentalists of our race."

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It is, no doubt, the fashion of history to ignore newspaper opinion, and possibly because the press is the most potent formative and creative force in modern civilization. It is necessary, however, in tracing the growth of this movement to profane the tradition, and to indicate the effective work performed by two powerful journals in fashioning public opinion for the acceptance of the policy of commercial union. It must be admitted also that they represented a considerable public feeling at the moment, even though we now know that the movement was always repugnant to the dominant commercial and political sentiment of the country. The Conservative press antagonized the programme of the commercial unionists from the outset. It was inimical to the interests of the protectionists, and in direct conflict with the fiscal and general policy of the Administration. It was argued that an American Zollverein would endanger British connection; that the abolition of the custom houses along the border would expose Canadian manufacturers to the overwhelming competition of the great specialized industries of the United States; that the proposal involved the acceptance of the American tariff, or at least of a tariff made at Washington; that the Canadian Parliament must become a mere machine for registering the fiscal decrees of Congress; and that a commercial union with the United States must lead inevitably to political union. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association adopted

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resolutions declaring that "unrestricted reciprocity" in manufactured goods would be a serious blow at the commercial integrity of the Dominion; would result disastrously to our manufacturing and farming industries, and our financial and commercial interests; and that the Association was, therefore, unanimously opposed to any treaty with the United States which would admit American manufactures into Canada free of duty.¹ There could be only one result to such a controversy, and it is a tribute to the skill and ardour of the commercial unionists that it required a stiff fight to check the momentum and establish the real tendencies of their agitation.

Nowhere was the proposal more thoroughly examined and more keenly debated than before the Board of Trade of Toronto. Encouraged by the measure of success achieved at many Farmers' Institutes, Mr. Darling ventured to submit to the Board a resolution in favour of commercial union. He was then an influential factor in the commercial life of Toronto, and the Board of Trade in particular had profited greatly by his progressive and energetic direction of its affairs. There was no one from whom the Board would have received the proposal in a more sympathetic spirit, and altogether the circumstances were not unfavourable to a fair and candid discussion of the subject. Consideration of Mr. Darling's motion was begun at a meeting held on May 19th, and was renewed at

¹ Meeting at Toronto, May 4th, 1887.

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subsequent special meetings of the Board. There was never any chance that commercial union would be accepted, and there was probably a feeling, stronger even than that which found expression, against any wide measure of reciprocity. But there seems to have been a disposition to reconcile conflicting opinions, and to reach a decision upon which all could unite. Whether by accident or design, it fell to the Hon. John Macdonald to assume the leadership of the forces opposed to commercial union. Mr. Macdonald had sat as a Liberal in the House of Commons, and was appointed to the Senate by Sir John Macdonald (the only Liberal, it may be stated by the way, whom the Conservative leader ever called to the Upper Chamber). He enjoyed in exceptional measure the confidence of the business community, and was influential alike with Liberals and Conservatives. After earnest and protracted debate, the Board accepted at his hands a resolution which said in substance that the Board was convinced that a commercial treaty, creditable and advantageous alike to both parties, could be framed in such a spirit of fairness as would afford the best guarantee for its perpetuity; but that, while in favour of all laudable means to serve an end so much desired, the Board must disapprove of any proposal to discriminate against Great Britain.

Many commercial unionists professed satisfaction with this resolution, while upon the other hand there was a feeling that in declaring for freer

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commercial intercourse with the United States the Board should have expressed clear and positive disapproval of a Zollverein. It was true that Mr. Darling's resolution was not accepted; but it was also true that commercial union was not expressly condemned, and that Mr. Macdonald's amendment was interpreted as a practical endorsement of the movement in which Mr. Wiman, Mr. Goldwin Smith, and their allies in both countries were engaged. It was, therefore, determined to have the question reconsidered. For this purpose a meeting was called for mid-June, and again two nights were spent in eager, and sometimes acrimonious discussion of the various propositions submitted. The outcome was the adoption by unanimous vote of a second resolution by Mr. Macdonald to the effect that the largest possible freedom of commercial intercourse between Canada and the United States compatible with Canada's relations to Great Britain was desirable; but that the Board could not entertain any proposal which would place Great Britain at any disadvantage as compared with the United States, or which would tend in any measure, however small, to weaken the bonds which bind Canada to the Empire. The Board also accepted by a vote of 63 to 36 a motion by Mr. G. A. Chapman, which declared, that whilst the Board was desirous of reciprocal trade relations in natural products with the United States, it was opposed to commercial union, "believing that it cannot be

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obtained without giving up the preservation of our autonomy as a separate nationality on this continent." The one resolution was not quite at peace with the other ; but at least a pronouncement against commercial union was obtained, and that was the determined purpose of the supporters of Mr. Chapman's motion.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Macdonald's resolution was accepted by Mr. Darling and Mr. Goldwin Smith. Mr. Darling argued that under commercial union permanence in our commercial relations with the United States would be secured. We could have commercial union only with Britain's consent. On a limited scale this would be in consonance with the most cherished principles of Britain. A portion of the British Empire would then be in the enjoyment of free trade with the United States. Mr. Goldwin Smith also declared that he did not believe the Old Country would be in any danger of estrangement from Canada by the consummation of commercial union. If the case were but fairly put before England, he was confident she would see that such a reciprocity of trade as commercial union would effect, would not only not strain the relations between England and Canada, but would ultimately redound to the advantage of England. Many of Mr. Goldwin Smith's utterances revealed this tone of sympathy for the old land, and sometimes we seemed to see the Imperial pride of an Englishman wrestling hard with the cold philosophy

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of his economic teaching. In one of his letters to *The Mail* in advocacy of commercial union, he said: "I am an Englishman and it would be difficult, I trust, to prove that I ever failed, when called upon, to show it. Were any measure really adverse to Great Britain proposed, if I could not conscientiously resist it I should stand aside. I am thoroughly convinced that free trade between Canada and the United States, even if it entails assimilation of tariffs, would not be adverse, but on the contrary, advantageous to Great Britain." He contended that the value of her six or seven hundred millions of investments in Canada would at once rise; that a new field for investment would be opened to British capitalists; and that even if the tariffs were assimilated, the joint scale would not be more adverse to Great Britain than the scale maintained by Canadian protectionists.¹

He put his argument very clearly in his introduction to the *Handbook of Commercial Union*, which was circulated as the League's chief campaign document. He there says: "That commercial union must be followed by political connection is a suspicion which has been sedulously propagated and has found entrance into many minds. It is partly fostered, perhaps, by the name, which, however, was adopted, it is believed, with the special object of marking that the union was to be commercial only and not political. No one will contend in face

¹ "Commercial Union Handbook," page 229.

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of familiar facts that two independent communities cannot make a commercial treaty without altering their political relations. In the present instance, no doubt, a necessity of an unusual character will be entailed by the combined action of the geographical relations and the present fiscal policy of both nations. The internal customs line being removed, if customs duties are still to be levied on the seaboard, it will be necessary to assimilate the tariffs, otherwise there will obviously be smuggling through one country into the other. But this is really no more subversive of our independence, or disparaging to our honour than other incidents of our geographical relation to the United States, such as our obligation to them for the use of their winter ports, and for the transmission of our goods in bond. . . . The Ottawa Parliament and Government would hardly be inclined to commit suicide because they had made an agreement with the Government at Washington respecting the rate of tariff. . . . It has been said that in Germany unification followed the Zollverein. The Zollverein, however, was at most a secondary cause. Germany, though politically decentralized, had been time out of mind a nation."¹

This position was held by the commercial unionists throughout all the period during which reciprocal trade with the United States was the chief issue before the country. They maintained their separate

¹ Introduction to "Commercial Union Handbook," pages 30, 31.

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organization, issued their own literature, and never quite coalesced with the Liberal party, or quite accepted unrestricted reciprocity as a satisfactory or practicable substitute for commercial union. On the eve of the general election of 1891, the Commercial Union Club of Toronto issued an address, in which they said: "Nor is our national honour threatened any more than our loyalty to Great Britain. Every nation in making a commercial treaty or agreement of any kind must resign to that extent, and for so long a time as the treaty lasts, its control over its own tariff. Great Britain herself does this when she makes a commercial treaty with France. Prussia did it when she entered into a Zollverein with the neighbouring states. Canada did it when she made with the United States the Reciprocal Treaty of 1854. But this implies no loss of commercial, much less of political, independence. Of political independence nothing can rob Canada but the vote of her people."¹

It will be remembered that Sir William Howland was one of the commissioners sent to Washington by the Coalition Government to negotiate for better commercial intercourse between the two countries through concurrent legislation. He had long since retired from active public life, but his interest in the commercial relations of Canada and the neighbouring country had not abated. The views he had held a quarter of a century before he

¹ See *Toronto Globe and Mail*, February 14th, 1891.

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still asserted with vigour and emphasis. In a statement made to an American journal, he said he was in favour of continental free trade, but not of such an arrangement as would require an assimilation of foreign tariffs. It was not reciprocity, he said, to touch the tariffs governing the trade of Canada and the United States with other countries. Let each country make its own tariff with other nations, but allow the fullest commercial intercourse with each other. It might be said, if the foreign tariffs of both countries were assimilated, that Canada had surrendered her political freedom, for it did not seem likely that the United States would lower her tariff to an equality with that of Canada; and for Canada to raise her tariff to the standard of the United States would almost debar England from trading with her. Under such an arrangement as he favoured, it would still be necessary to maintain the border custom houses in order to prevent the passage into either country, except in a legal way, of products bought in foreign countries. The excise laws of the two countries might be adjusted so that the products, the manufacture of which is governed by them, might freely pass the borders. He added: "In periods of national depression there was liable to be talk and even fear of annexation; but if commercial union gave prosperity to Canada, and he believed it would, her people would not bother about advocating annexation. The man with a full stomach and full pocket was seldom disloyal. That

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feeling was the inheritance of the poor and hungry, who were anxious to better their condition.”¹ This view recalls the notion, which even Sir John Macdonald did not altogether reject, that the statesmen of the South favoured the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 in order to allay discontent in Canada, and thus avert the annexation of new states imbued with the Northern sentiment against the system of black slavery.

Far more significant than the statement of Sir William Howland, who had ceased to be a political leader, or even than the position of Mr. Goldwin Smith, who had never become a political leader, was a speech made by Sir Richard Cartwright on October 12th, 1887, at Ingersoll. He was for the moment the most influential personality in the Liberal party, at least in the federal arena, and his words had an authority with the Liberals of Ontario which Mr. Laurier could not yet command. This speech was a stern arraignment of the Administration of Sir John Macdonald, a lucid, if gloomy, presentation of the financial and industrial condition of the country, and a direct acceptance of the policy of commercial union as the only effectual remedy for the economic and political evils which he deplored. He said in the course of his argument: “I am as averse as any man can be to annexation, or to resign our political independence, but I cannot shut my eyes to the facts. We have greatly

¹ New York *Sun*, May 31st, 1887.

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misused our advantages. We have been most foolish and most wasteful in our expenditures. We have no means of satisfying the just demands of large portions of the Dominion except through such an arrangement as commercial union." "There is," he said, "a risk, and I cannot overlook it. But it is a choice of risks, and our present position is anything but one of stable equilibrium. Without Manitoba and the Maritime Provinces we cannot maintain ourselves as a Dominion. And looking to their present tempers and condition, and more especially to the financial results of Confederation in the Maritime Provinces, I say deliberately that the refusal or failure to secure free trade with the United States is much more likely to bring about just such a political crisis as these parties affect to dread than even the very closest commercial connection that can be conceived."

Thus Sir Richard Cartwright was the first of the active political leaders of the country to declare for commercial union, and naturally there was keen and even anxious interest to know how Mr. Laurier would deal with the movement which was crowding all other questions into the background. Mr. Blake told us in his celebrated letter to the Liberals of West Durham that he refused to make commercial union the policy of the Liberal party, but he seems to have been willing to settle the fisheries' dispute with the United States on the basis of extended commercial intercourse. In 1884, while

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Mr. Blake was still leader of the Liberal party, and just after the Washington Government had given notice of the termination of the fishery clauses of the Washington Treaty, Mr. Davies, of Prince Edward Island, offered a motion in Parliament, which no doubt expressed the policy of the Opposition, and which declared that steps should be taken at an early day by the Government of Canada with the object of bringing about negotiations for a new treaty, providing for the citizens of Canada and the United States the reciprocal privileges of fishing and freedom from duties now enjoyed, together with additional reciprocal freedom in the trade relations of the two countries.¹ This position Mr. Laurier maintained when he became the leader of the Liberal party, and it is not clear that his attitude on commercial union was very different from that taken by Mr. Blake.

Mr. Laurier's first important public address after his election to the Liberal leadership was made at Somerset, Que., in August, 1887. He there indicated his distinct preference for a trade alliance between Great Britain and her colonies over a commercial union with the United States. He said: "We know that there is to-day in the United States a group of men determined upon giving us commercial union. We know that Mr. Butterworth, a member of the American Congress, has brought in a bill for that purpose. We know also that Mr.

¹ Hansard, 1884, page 1,182.

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Wiman has lately visited Ontario to induce that province to adopt the idea of commercial union. We know that Detroit and other cities, as well as their trade organizations, have to a certain extent pronounced in favour of commercial union. If I am asked at present for my own opinion on the subject, I may say that for my part I am not ready to declare that commercial union is an acceptable idea. I am not ready for my part to say that commercial union should be adopted at the present moment. A great deal of study and reflection are needed to solve this question, for and against which there is much to be said. The commercial union idea may be realized, and it may also be surrounded by insurmountable difficulties. But I say this—and it is my actual policy—that the time has come to abandon the policy of retaliation followed thus far by the Canadian Government, to show the American people that we are brothers, and to hold out our hands to them, with a due regard for the duties we owe to our Mother Country. In certain quarters commercial union with Great Britain has been advocated, which obliges me to refer to that proposition. Commercial union with Great Britain has been suggested as an alternative to commercial union with the United States. As far as I am concerned, I will say of commercial union with Great Britain what I have said of commercial union with the United States. I do not believe that so far the question has been practically discussed. Certainly, if

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it were reasonable, and all our interests were protected, I would accept a commercial treaty of that nature. It is permissible to suppose that this movement would be taken up by all the countries which at the present day recognize the supremacy of Great Britain. Some years ago, in 1883 or 1884, I think, Mr. Rouher, one of the most eminent public men of France, said, 'at present the world's equilibrium rests no longer, as in the past, on the Alps and the Pyrenees, but on the two hemispheres.' What was true at that time in politics is true to-day in trade. The commerce of the world, which was formerly limited to the nations of Europe, now takes in the entire globe. There is, therefore, room to suppose that all the nations recognizing the sovereignty of Great Britain would agree to rally together by means of commercial treaties. With this object in view delegates are now being sent to Australia. What would be easier than to open up a trade with Australia, than to have a commercial treaty with the Australian continent? I consider the idea as good and fair, and such being the case I believe that it will eventually triumph."¹

Two months later Sir Richard Cartwright made his speech at Ingersoll, and there is undoubtedly a conflict in the tone and argument of the two deliverances. For the time the speech of Sir Richard Cartwright was perhaps regarded, at least in Ontario, as the more authoritative utterance, and there

¹Speech at Somerset, Que., August 2nd, 1887.

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was a general expectation that commercial union would be formally and definitely adopted as the trade policy of the Liberal party. But the necessity under commercial union for a common tariff and discrimination against Great Britain grew the more distasteful to a formidable element of the Liberal party the more the question was considered, and it became manifest that just so soon as the feeling of the party could find some official utterance, these features of the proposal would be explicitly rejected. The situation was greatly clarified by a correspondence which passed during the month of November between Mr. Edgar, M.P., and Mr. Wiman; and, if we do not mistake, it was in these letters of Mr. Edgar that the policy of unrestricted reciprocity was first definitely presented, and by these letters that the judgment of many Liberals was finally settled against the acceptance of commercial union. Mr. Edgar argued that a complete system of reciprocity of tariffs between Canada and the United States could be carried on without abolishing our custom houses, or tying our hands as to tariff legislation in any other respect. He pointed out that under the Elgin Treaty of 1854 we had a fair amount of free trade with the United States without adopting their customs duties. Our custom houses were not abolished on the frontier. Certain articles, the produce of both countries, were mutually admitted free of duty, and were entered and passed through the custom houses as free

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goods. In 1874 the George Brown draft treaty, which was provisionally sanctioned by the American Government, proposed a much larger free list between the two countries, and embraced a number of manufactures. There was, however, in it no proposal to abolish custom houses nor to legislate for uniform tariffs.¹

It was in this sense that the Interprovincial Conference which sat at Quebec in the autumn of 1887 agreed upon a declaration in favour of free trade with the United States. The conference included representatives of the Liberal Governments of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, of the coalition Government of New Brunswick, and of the Conservative Government of Manitoba, and they unanimously adopted the reciprocity resolution. It was as follows: "That having reference to the agitation on the subject of the trade relations between the Dominion and the United States, this Interprovincial Conference, consisting of representatives of all political parties, desires to record its opinion that unrestricted reciprocity would be of advantage to all the provinces of the Dominion; that this Conference and the people it represents cherish fervent loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, and warm attachment to British connection; and that this Conference is of opinion that a fair measure providing under proper conditions for unrestricted reciprocity in trade rela-

¹ *Toronto Globe*, November 15th, 22nd, and 29th, 1887.

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tions between the Dominion and the United States would not lessen these sentiments on the part of our people, but on the contrary may even serve to increase them, and would at the same time, in connection with the adjustment of the fishery dispute, tend to happily settle grave difficulties which have from time to time arisen between the Mother Country and the United States.”¹

In December of this year it became necessary to elect a member of the Commons for East Northumberland. Dr. Mallory ran as the joint candidate of the Liberals and Commercial Unionists. Mr. Goldwin Smith took the stump in his behalf, and hardly any other issue was raised in the contest. Dr. Mallory was beaten, but only by a very small majority, and the contest gave no indication of deep popular feeling against the policy which he had deliberately elected to champion.² In the meantime, Mr. Wiman had spoken at many meetings throughout Ontario and at chief points in some of the other provinces in support of commercial union, while an equally vigorous assault upon the movement was maintained by Col. Geo. T. Denison, Mr. D’Alton McCarthy, M.P., Principal Grant, and other leaders of the Imperial Federation League in Canada. The speakers of the League, and they spoke with marked effect, argued for

¹ *Toronto Globe*, November 10th, 1887.

² The total vote for Cochrane (Conservative) was 2,148, for Mallory (Commercial Unionist) 2,124; majority for Cochrane 24.

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preferential fiscal arrangements between the several parts of the Empire, and vehemently protested against consideration of any trade policy which would discriminate against the Mother Country or any part of the Empire in favour of a foreign power.

As the year was going out the Hon. J. W. Longley, of Halifax, Senator Macdonald, of Toronto, and Mr. J. X. Perrault, of Montreal, spoke at Boston. Mr. Longley made an eloquent argument for free trade with the Republic. Mr. Macdonald insisted that the two countries should adopt the largest possible commercial reciprocity compatible with existing rights and with national obligations, but that it was not right to sweep away by legislative action industries which had been fostered and called into life by legislative action. Mr. Perrault demanded unrestricted commercial relations between Canada and the States. No progress was made with Mr. Butterworth's bill in Congress, and the proposition was not entertained, if considered at all, by the negotiators of the Fisheries Treaty. In fact, Mr. Chamberlain had said at Belfast, while on his way to Washington, "Canada knows perfectly well that commercial union with the United States means political separation from Great Britain." He came on to Toronto from Washington, and accepted a dinner from the Board of Trade. The speeches turned mainly upon continental and Imperial relationships, and Mr. Chamberlain was hardly less

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frank than at Belfast. He said: "I am in favour of the widest possible commercial union and intercourse, not only with the United States, but with all the world. That is the true unrestricted reciprocity. There is, however, a restricted reciprocity which would make you dependent for your financial freedom upon the Government of another state, and perhaps pave the way for the surrender of something which is still more important, I mean your political independence."

Thus the controversy stood when Parliament assembled for the session of 1888, and the Liberal members came together in caucus in order to define the policy of the party on the subject which for many months had engrossed the attention of the country. It is not disputed that there were commercial unionists among the Liberal members of the Commons, and, in fact, some of these were so resolutely set upon the advocacy of the project that they refused to accept the decision of caucus, and tabled motions in favour of a Zollverein as preferable to any less limited measure of reciprocity. The overwhelming judgment of caucus, however, was against commercial union, and against any proposition which involved a common tariff and fiscal dependence upon Washington. But it is still true that the resolution which Sir Richard Cartwright was authorized to introduce did imply discrimination against Great Britain, and this the mover undertook to justify by showing that the existing Canadian

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tariff was pretty nearly as hostile to British manufacturers as that of the United States ; that if conditions remained unchanged the Canadian tariff must become the more onerous of the two ; that under unrestricted reciprocity we should become richer, and therefore buy more largely from Great Britain, although there would be an alteration in the character of our imports ; that England was essentially just and would concede the right of Canada to make any legitimate bargain that would serve the interests of her people ; and that it was for Canadians to decide whether they should continue to be a hostage to the United States for the good behaviour of England, or rise equal to the situation and become a link of union and concord between the two great English races. The resolution which Sir Richard Cartwright introduced on March 14th, 1888, read as follows: "That it is highly desirable that the largest possible freedom of commercial intercourse should obtain between the Dominion of Canada and the United States, and that it is expedient that all articles manufactured in or the natural products of either of the said countries, should be admitted free of duty into the ports of the other, articles subject to duties of excise or of internal revenue alone excepted ; that it is further expedient that the Government of the Dominion should take steps at an early date to ascertain on what terms and conditions arrangements can be effected with the United States

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for the purpose of securing full and unrestricted reciprocity of trade therewith."

It is doubtful if this resolution did not go beyond the general feeling and purpose of the Liberal party. It seemed, however, to the leaders that in order to make an issue with the Government on the question, it was necessary to adopt a positive policy, and to go further than the protectionists would allow Sir John Macdonald to travel. They were also persuaded that the condition of the country required an heroic remedy, and that no proposal for limited reciprocity would be considered at Washington. They considered, further, that under continental free trade the chief manufactures of Canada would experience such expansion, and the producing classes reap such signal benefits, that solid and abiding political contentment under British connection would go hand in hand with closer commercial connection with the great English-speaking nation of the new continent. But, of course, the Conservative party had an undoubted right to attack the resolution upon its face, and hold the Liberals to the literal language of their platform. The policy was essentially weak at two points: (1) It was exceedingly difficult to show that absolute reciprocity could be arranged short of a common tariff; and (2) the Liberal party had no power, failing concurrent action at Washington, to put their policy into effect. The obvious answer to the first objection that if it were found necessary to adopt a common

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tariff a less measure of reciprocity must be accepted, could not be made without leaving the platform open to adoption by Sir John Macdonald whenever he found it necessary or expedient to go to the country. Then, as to the second objection, politicians out of office could not conduct negotiations at Washington and, therefore, any definite arrangement could neither be sought nor obtained. The policy of unrestricted reciprocity was now, however, irrevocably adopted, and for the next three years all the energies of the Liberal press and the Liberal leaders were devoted to educating the country to acceptance of the proposition. Mr. Laurier and Sir Richard Cartwright were particularly active, and there is no doubt their arguments told powerfully upon the people from one end of the Dominion to the other.

CHAPTER XXII

THE RECIPROCITY CAMPAIGN

TOWARDS the close of 1890 there were rumours of a premature dissolution of Parliament; but in view of the character of the campaign which the Conservative party had waged against the Liberal trade policy, no one was prepared for a ministerial change of front upon that question. That, however, is exactly what was contemplated. On January 16th, 1891, *The Empire*, then the chief organ of the Conservative party, published a despatch from its Ottawa correspondent, in which it was said: "It is learned from the very best sources that the Canadian Government has recently been approached by the United States Government with a view to the development of trade relations between the two countries, and that our Government has requested the advice of Her Majesty's Government on the subject."¹ Shortly after the appearance of this despatch Sir John Macdonald visited Toronto, and in a speech at the Albany Club said: "While we are going to stand by our National Policy, it is the fact that every

¹ "The answer made by Mr. Blaine, the Secretary of the United States, on behalf of his Government, was an overture to reciprocity."—Sir John Thompson at a public meeting in Toronto, February 6th, 1891.

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measure of reciprocal trade we have got from our neighbours has been got by the Conservatives. The Treaty of 1854 was got by a Conservative Government; the Treaty of Washington, in 1870, was negotiated by himself as Canadian commissioner; and when the Treaty of 1888 was made, Sir Charles Tupper, who had long been a colleague, was specially appointed a commissioner. So that every treaty extending trade with our neighbours had been got by Conservatives, and by Governments of which he was a member. He believed there was room for extending our trade on a fair basis, and that there were things in which we could enlarge our bounds without in any way infringing on the National Policy.”¹

On February 3rd the dissolution of Parliament was announced, and simultaneously with the announcement, *The Empire* detailed at length the steps taken by the Government for the initiation of reciprocity negotiations at Washington. The Ottawa correspondent of *The Empire* wrote that: “In view of the importance of the reasons which have induced the Government to appeal to the country at the present moment, *The Empire* is privileged to publish a copy of the despatch from His Excellency the Governor-General to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, showing the nature of the Government’s proposals to the United States, and indicating the earnest desire of the Adminis-

¹ *Toronto Empire*, January 28th, 1891.

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tration for the development of trade between the United States and Canada." The correspondent went on to explain that several weeks previous to the date of writing, when negotiations were in progress between Newfoundland and the United States looking to a reciprocity treaty, the Canadian Government made representations that Canada should have the option of being included in any arrangements with that colony as to the fisheries or trade. This contention was based on solemn assurances given by the Newfoundland Government two or three years before, and repeated on successive occasions, that if special privileges were allowed to any country in regard to the purchase of supplies or bait in Newfoundland, such privileges would also be granted to Canada. The Secretary of State for the United States, when he learned of the position of affairs, insisted that the negotiations should be carried on separately. He intimated, however, that he would not be unwilling to enter into negotiations with Canada, but preferred that they should be private and unofficial. The Dominion Government thereupon asked the Imperial authorities to remind Mr. Blaine that Canada had always been ready for a fair reciprocal arrangement, and had made repeated offers to that effect, which, however, had been ignored or refused by the United States. It was further represented that the Dominion Government was willing, now that overtures had been made to them, again to negotiate,

and that they would prefer that these negotiations should be official and under a commission from the British Government. Mr. Blaine thereupon asked upon what basis the Dominion Government proposed to negotiate, and in response the Canadian Ministers caused to be sent to Lord Knutsford, for transmission to Washington, a despatch stating the subjects which Canada desired to have considered by a joint commission. The subjects covered by the despatch to Lord Knutsford were:

1. Renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854, with the modifications required by the altered circumstances of both countries, and with the extensions deemed by the commission to be in the interests of Canada and the United States.

2. Reconsideration of the Treaty of 1888 with respect to the Atlantic fisheries, with the aim of securing the free admission into the United States markets of Canadian fishery products, in return for facilities to be granted to United States fishermen to buy bait and supplies, and to tranship cargoes in Canada, all such privileges to be mutual.

3. Protection of mackerel and other fisheries on the Atlantic Ocean and in inland waters.

4. Relaxation of the seaboard coasting laws of the two countries.

5. Relaxation of the coasting laws of the two countries on the inland waters dividing Canada from the United States.

6. Mutual salvage and saving of wrecked vessels.

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7. Arrangements for settling the boundary between Canada and Alaska.

In a leading article in the same issue, *The Empire* thus dealt with the proposals and the position of the Administration: "We are convinced that the utmost satisfaction will be felt by the people of Canada at the completeness of our Government's proposals, and at the evident proof of their desire to settle the principal questions at issue between the two countries on a basis honourable to both, and to extend international trade so far as it can be extended to the mutual advantage, and without sacrificing the interests of either nation. The position of the Government of Canada we take to be this, that in any measure of reciprocity we must consider the changed conditions that have grown up since the abrogation of the Treaty of 1854, and that Canada, while ready and anxious to extend trade in mutually beneficial lines, must stand firmly by her national industries and carefully conserve her industrial system. There is no reason why a fair and honourable reciprocity, advantageous to both Canada and the United States, should not be the issue of such a discussion as is proposed. We believe that the people of Canada will endorse our Government in the policy it has been pursuing, and will strengthen its hands in the attempt to secure a fair treaty, without that absolute surrender of our commercial system which is necessarily involved in the Opposition policy, with its declared intention of

reducing Canada to a state of vassalage in subjection to the United States, of discriminating against the trade of the Empire, and forcing us into direct taxation."¹

It is clear that the relative positions of the political parties in Canada were materially altered by the announcement that the Government had actually entered into negotiations with Washington for extended commercial intercourse and the amicable settlement of all questions at issue between the two countries. It was particularly gratifying to Canada that the negotiations should have begun at the instance of the Washington authorities, and it was a fair assumption that no overtures would have been made if the American Administration were not ready to concede a generous measure of reciprocity. It could reasonably be argued that as the Americans had deliberately opened negotiations with Sir John Macdonald and his Ministers, and as these Ministers desired only the sanction of the country to conclude a treaty, it would be rash and untimely to disturb the negotiations by a change of Government in Canada, and bring in a Liberal Administration which would perhaps make unnecessary concessions to the United States. There seemed to be hope, according to the inspired despatches from Ottawa, that a renewal of the Treaty of 1854 would be accepted at Washington. At least it was possible to quiet the protected manufacturers

¹ Editorial in the *Toronto Empire*, February 4th, 1891.

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with the assurance that only reciprocity in natural products would be sanctioned, while for the farmers there was the promise of "modifications required by the altered circumstances of both countries, and the extensions deemed by the commission to be in the interests of Canada and the United States." In short, the Government seemed to be asking authority to negotiate for either restricted or unrestricted reciprocity, and in face of the country, on the eve of an election, the Opposition stood naked and bereft of the one issue upon which they had elected to challenge the Administration.

Naturally there was blank consternation in the ranks of the Liberal party, and profound suspicion of the good faith of the Conservative leaders. The truth seems to be that the Government had constructed an electioneering sham, and had resorted even to misrepresentation in order to baffle and checkmate the leaders of the Opposition, and snatch a favourable verdict from the country. There was amazement in Washington as well as in Canada over the attitude of the Canadian Government, and the representations made on its behalf to the Canadian electors. Congressman Baker, of the Rochester district, in the State of New York, addressed Mr. Blaine on the subject. He pointed out in his letter to the Secretary of State that it was reported in the newspapers of Canada and along the northern border of his State, where his constituents were deeply interested in the subject, that negotiations

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were going on between the United States and Great Britain with a view to partial reciprocity with Canada, covering natural products only and not manufactures; and it was stated that Sir Charles Tupper was on his way to Washington as a commissioner to negotiate for such modification of the American tariff. In reply, Mr. Blaine said: "I authorize you to contradict the rumours you refer to. There are no negotiations whatever on foot for a reciprocity treaty with Canada, and you may be assured no such scheme for reciprocity with the Dominion confined to natural products will be entertained by this Government. We know nothing of Sir Charles Tupper's coming to Washington."

It may be as well to say now that this statement by Mr. Blaine was strictly accurate, in so far as concerned the origin of the negotiations, and that Sir Charles Tupper afterwards confessed over his own signature that any statement that the invitation to negotiate had come from Washington was untrue.¹ He was less candid when he declared that

¹ "In view of the fact that you had come to the State Department with the proposals, and that the subject was then for the first time mentioned between us—and in view of the further fact that I agreed to a private conference, as explained in my minute, I confess it was a surprise to me when several weeks later, during the Canadian canvas, Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper both stated before public assemblages that an informal discussion of a reciprocity treaty would take place at Washington after the 4th of March, by the initiation of the Secretary of State. . . . I deem it important, since the matter has been for some weeks open to public remark, to have it settled that the conference was not 'initiated' by me, but on the contrary that the

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absolutely no negotiations were afoot. There was at least the arrangement for negotiations, and if all the truth were known it would probably be found that Canada was forced to intervene in order to prevent the conclusion of a treaty between Newfoundland and the United States, which gravely threatened the fishing interests of Canada, and which, when finally drafted, the Imperial Government—as in the case of Prince Edward Island many years before—refused to sanction, as inimical to the general interests of the British American communities. Mr. Blaine's letter greatly exasperated the Conservative press and the Conservative politicians in Canada, and he was viciously caricatured and violently lampooned throughout the election contest. It was vain, in face of his letter, to maintain the pretence of negotiations for reciprocity in natural products only, and the Government was forced to make its appeal to the protected interests, to the sentiment of attachment to British institutions, and to such prejudice against the United States as lurked in the hearts of Canadians. "The old flag, the old

private arrangement of which I spoke was but a modification of your proposal, and in no sense an original suggestion from the Government of the United States."—Letter of the Hon. J. G. Blaine, Secretary of State of the United States, to Sir Julian Pauncefote, British Minister at Washington, April 1st, 1891.

"I told Mr. Blaine that I wished in the outset to recognize the accuracy of the statement contained in his letter to Sir Julian Pauncefote, which I had seen, in reference to the initiation of the negotiations regarding reciprocal trade arrangements between the two countries."—Letter of Sir Charles Tupper to Sir John Macdonald, April 21st, 1891.

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man, and the old policy" was the battle cry of the party, and it no doubt appealed with peculiar force to the sentiments, the prejudices, and the interests of powerful elements of the Canadian people.¹ It was a campaign of shrieking, of denunciation, and of violence; and no doubt very many of the electorate were thoroughly persuaded that the fate of British connection depended upon the result of the contest. There were intemperate utterances by Liberals as well as by Conservatives, and in too much of the Opposition literature that deep note of pessimism and tone of contempt for sentimental considerations which are always offensive to the national pride and the sturdy self-reliance of Anglo-Saxon peoples.

Sir John Macdonald's address to the country is a thoroughly characteristic specimen of his electioneering methods. It gives countenance to the baser charges and the meaner suspicions against his opponents. It is a crafty appeal to prejudice, rather than a solid argument addressed to the sober judgment of the people upon real issues of public policy. The concluding sentences sufficiently attest its character. "As for myself," said Sir John Macdonald, "my course is clear. A British subject I was born, a British subject I will die. With my

¹ The campaign motto, "The old man, the old flag, and the old policy," was the coinage of the late L. P. Kribs, who was news editor of the *Toronto Empire* during all the time that it was published, and whose political writing in various Canadian papers during a score of years attracted wide and favourable attention.

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utmost effort, with my latest breath will I oppose the 'veiled treason' which attempts by sordid means and mercenary proffers to lure our people from their allegiance. During my long public service of nearly half a century, I have been true to my country and its best interests, and I appeal with equal confidence to the men who have trusted me in the past, and to the young hope of the country, with whom rest its destinies for the future, to give me their united and strenuous aid in this my last effort for the unity of the Empire, and the preservation of our commercial and political freedom." Strained and exaggerated as this language now seems, there was the skill of the master in the appeal, and it touched the very springs of the affection and veneration for Sir John Macdonald which lay deep in the hearts of the Canadian people.

Mr. Laurier a few days later sent out from Quebec an address to the people in reply to the Conservative leader, remarkable for its prudence and courage, its clear and straightforward definition of the Liberal policy, and its calmness and restraint in the face of exceptional provocation. The Liberal leader said: "We have been led to suppose by the Ministerial press that the dissolution was taking place with the view of consulting the Canadian people upon the advisability of sending commissioners to Washington for the purpose of attempting to negotiate a treaty for the reciprocal exchange of natural products between the two countries. Indeed

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we have been informed that overtures in that respect had been made to the Imperial Government, yet, strange to say, of this not a word is to be found in the manifesto of the Prime Minister.

“The reform suggested [by the Liberal party] is absolute reciprocal freedom of trade between Canada and the United States. The advantages of this policy we place upon this one consideration that the producing power of the community is vastly in excess of its consuming power; that, as a consequence new markets have to be found abroad, and that our geographical position makes the great neighbouring nation of 63,000,000 people of kindred origin our best market. Indeed the advantages of this policy are so various that they are not denied, nor the statement of the same contradicted; but three objections are urged against it. It is asserted: (a) That this policy would discriminate against England; (b) that it would make direct taxation unavoidable; and (c) that it is ‘veiled treason’ and would lead to annexation.

“The charge that unrestricted reciprocity would involve discrimination against England cannot have much weight in the mouths of men whose policy was protection, whose object was to do away with the importation of English manufactured goods, whose object was to destroy British trade to that extent. It is well, however, to meet this charge squarely and earnestly. It cannot be expected, it were folly to expect, that the interests of a colony

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must always be identical with the interests of the mother land. The day must come when from no other cause than the development of national life in the colony there must be a clashing of interests with the mother land, and in any such case, much as I would regret the necessity, I would stand by my native land. Moreover, the assertion that unrestricted reciprocity means discrimination against England, involves the proposition that the Canadian tariff would have to be assimilated to the American tariff. I deny the proposition. Reciprocity can be obtained upon an assimilation of tariffs, or upon the retention of its own tariff by each country. Reciprocity is a matter of agreement to be obtained only by mutual concessions between the two countries. Should the concessions demanded from the people of Canada involve consequences injurious to their sense of duty either to themselves or the mother land, the people of Canada would not have reciprocity at such a price; but to reject the idea of reciprocity in advance before a treaty has been made on account of consequences which can spring only from the existence of a treaty, is manifestly as illogical as it is unfair. . . .

“The charge that unrestricted reciprocity is ‘veiled treason’ is a direct and unworthy appeal to passion and prejudice. It is an unworthy appeal even when presented with the great authority of Sir John Macdonald’s name. As to the consequent charge that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to

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annexation, if it means anything it means that unrestricted reciprocity would make the people so prosperous that, not satisfied with a commercial alliance, they would forthwith vote for political absorption in the American Republic. If this be not the true meaning implied in the charge, I leave it to every man's judgment that it is unintelligible on any other ground."

This address gave fresh courage and confidence to Liberals throughout the country, and dispelled the fears of many that the Liberal leaders had some secret understanding with Washington, and were bent upon a quarrel with Great Britain, if that should become necessary to the establishment of unrestricted reciprocity. But the stock of Conservative ammunition was not exhausted. For some weeks they had been preparing for the decisive stroke of the contest, and it was finally delivered under circumstances which made it peculiarly sensational and impressive. In July, 1890, Mr. Edward Farrer, who had served for some years as chief editorial writer on *The Mail*, accepted a similar position on *The Globe* newspaper. Mr. Farrer had earned a wide reputation by his forceful handling of several great controversies. His work had strength, dignity, and finish. He had a remarkable persistence in attack, and a capacity for economic argument such as few other writers in Canadian journalism have possessed. The first hint of some projected exposure was dropped by Sir John Thompson in

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the course of a speech at Halifax. He intimated that the country would shortly be furnished with conclusive proof of the treasonable relations of one of the leaders of the Liberal party with politicians at Washington. Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper were announced to speak at Toronto on February 17th, and it was whispered in advance that startling revelations were impending. It was the veteran Conservative leader himself who undertook to lead the attack upon Mr. Farrer, and to hold the Liberal party responsible for his proceedings. Mr. Farrer had written a pamphlet dealing with the Atlantic fisheries, the disposition of the fishermen towards the United States, and the methods adopted by Sir John Macdonald to reconcile the Eastern Provinces to exclusion from the American market. The *brochure* hinted at the imposition by the United States of a tonnage tax on Nova Scotia vessels laden whole or in part with fish as a means of stopping seizures of American vessels; at the suspension of the bonding privilege; at cutting the connection of the Canadian Pacific Railway with United States territory at Sault Ste. Marie; at measures to oblige Great Britain to withdraw her countenance and support from the Canadian contention as she did in 1871; and declared that Sir John Macdonald's disappearance from the stage would be the signal for a movement in Canada towards annexation.

Proof sheets of this pamphlet were stolen from a

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Toronto printing office and put into the hands of Sir John Macdonald, and it was not unnatural that the Conservative politicians should seek to connect the Liberal party with its preparation and publication. Sir John Macdonald gave the most damaging interpretation to the document, and professed to find in its pages conclusive evidence of the determination of the Liberal leaders to hand Canada over to the United States. Mr. Farrer, however, in a signed letter in *The Globe* of the next morning frankly and courageously assumed responsibility for the pamphlet, and explained that it was written for an American friend, that only twelve copies were printed, that one had gone to the United States and one to Great Britain, and the remaining copies were still in his possession. He said that he had undertaken to prepare the statement before he had any connection with *The Globe*, good, bad, or indifferent. "But," said Mr. Farrer, "the accident that I was on another journal does not affect the case at all. I should do the same thing if I saw fit to-morrow, without reference to *The Globe*, just as I did it without reference to *The Mail*; for surely a writer on a newspaper, conducted—as all Canadian papers are—on the impersonal system, is entitled to his private opinions and his personal liberty of action." He adhered to his opinion that political union with the United States was the manifest destiny of Canada, and that Sir John Macdonald's methods of Government would not

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outlast him; and he concluded: "I deny the assumption that *The Globe* or the Liberal party is bound or affected by anything written, said, or done by a mere writer for *The Globe* in his private hours or private capacity. It would be a monstrous thing for Mr. Laurier to apply that code to any of the writers on *The Empire*, or for Mr. Gladstone, let us say, to employ it against somebody connected with *The Standard*. A newspaper is to be judged by its printed utterances, and is no more responsible for the acts or opinions of its staff outside of its columns than for what they choose to have for dinner. Any other understanding would render the pursuit of journalism extremely difficult, if not impossible, both for employers and employed."

This was a reasonable statement, as truthful as it was frank, but the Conservative papers held to Mr. Farrer's pamphlet as one of the great issues of the contest, and the shouts of treason grew ever louder, the appeal to passion and prejudice more vehement, the charges of plotting and conspiracy more shrill and insistent. Later in the campaign private letters from Mr. Farrer and Congressman Hitt, of Illinois, were read by Sir Charles Tupper at a public meeting at Windsor; but neither these letters nor the pamphlet involved the Liberal leaders, or furnished evidence of any organized movement to separate Canada from Great Britain, and throw the country into the arms of the United States. If Mr. Farrer was a political unionist, he

had distinguished prototypes in the ranks of the Conservative party of other days, some of whom lived to do great and eminent service for Canada, and to receive even the recognition of the British sovereign. Ostracism for opinion's sake can never be very successful in a British country.

The significance of Mr. Farrer's pamphlet was greatly exaggerated, and the deductions drawn from its discovery were wholly unwarranted. There was no plot. There was no conspiracy. There was no intrigue with Washington. There was not even the shadow of an understanding with Mr. Blaine, or any other American statesman, that in case of success in the elections the trade policy of the Liberal party would be accepted by the Washington Administration. The Liberal leaders, in fact, had expressly rejected the policy of commercial union, and stood only for such a measure of free trade with the United States as would be sanctioned by the Home Government. The utterances of Mr. Laurier, of Mr. Mowat, of Mr. Mackenzie, of the mass of Liberal politicians and journals, could not be misunderstood. There were, no doubt, political unionists among Liberals, as among Conservatives, but the overwhelming sentiment of the Liberal party was uncompromisingly British, and no considerations of material advantage could overcome their attachment to British institutions, or uproot their devotion to throne and Empire.

Mr. Mackenzie, now a broken and pathetic figure,

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passing swiftly towards the end, was renominated by the Liberals of East York, and in his only address to his constituents, and, in fact, his last public utterance, he said: "It has been said by some of the ministerial papers that Great Britain would not consent to any extension of a free trade policy. I can only say that in the negotiations of 1874 at Washington, conducted by Mr. George Brown, the Government was in active communication with the Colonial Office, and a list of the articles proposed to be embodied in the new treaty was transmitted for consideration to Downing Street. The general spirit which pervaded these communications was simply that Canada and Canadians knew best what suited themselves. No doubt they were also aware of the fact that anything which benefited Canadian trade would more or less be grateful to the statesmen of the Mother Country. I could never consent to the Zollverein policy for obvious reasons, but I cannot conceive why anyone should object to reciprocal free trade secured by treaty and not inimical to the interests of Great Britain as the heart of the Empire."¹

While the hue and cry against Mr. Farrer was at its height Mr. Mowat spoke in Toronto, and he unquestionably voiced the deep-seated sentiment of the Liberal party. "There is," he said "but a fragment of our people, either Conservatives or Reformers, who do not love British connection. There

¹ *Toronto Globe*, January 9th, 1891.

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is but a fragment of our people who take any other view, and there are as many of that fragment on the Conservative side as on the Reform side. For myself I am a true Briton. I love the old land very dearly. I am glad I was born a British subject. A British subject I have lived for three-score years, and something more—I hope to live my life a British subject and as a British subject die. I trust and I hope that my children and my grandchildren, who have also been born British subjects, will live their lives as British subjects and as British subjects die. As loving my country in this way I rejoice that there is so much loyalty amongst the people. I rejoice at it even though sometimes it is perverted by those who have some base object to serve by the perversion of it. Do not let any one make you suppose that loyalty requires any measure which is opposed to the national interests of the country, British connection has never done us any harm; British connection has never stood in the way of the industry of this country; British connection has been an advantage to us, and I believe will always continue to be an advantage to us. You are my fellow-Britons; you are my fellow-loyalists; let us take care that in this matter we are not deceived by those who have an object in deceiving us. Let us all take care that we shall not be drawn into the absurdity of considering that reciprocity to a certain extent may be a good thing, may be for our advantage, may confirm the loyalty of our people,

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may put down all thought of annexation, but that if that is extended a little further, it brings on annexation, brings on anti-British feeling amongst us. I utterly repudiate that. The sentiment of the country is far stronger than our opponents pretend, and than a few of our own friends have been led to believe. Our opponents are afraid of being Yankeeified if they get unrestricted reciprocity. We are not afraid of being Yankeeified by any such thing. I am quite sure that the Reformers will not be Yankeeified by unrestricted reciprocity, and I hope the Conservatives will not be Yankeeified either by any such means."¹

This was the tone of the Liberal press and the Liberal speakers all over the country, and nothing could be wider of the mark than to treat the election of 1891 as a contest between British connection and continentalism. Polling took place on March 5th, and the result, under all the circumstances, was remarkable. Mr. Laurier had often said that the Liberal party could not obtain office while Sir John Macdonald lived. There could be hardly any doubt that the old Conservative leader was engaged in his last fight, and that he commanded the passionate devotion of his party. He had likewise the very general support of the bankers, traders, and manufacturers of the country, and the sympathetic regard of that great independent element which distrusts new men and new proposals,

¹ *Toronto Globe*, February 19th, 1891.

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and silently determines the issue of so many contests. He had the advantage also of the strenuous efforts made by his press and his campaigners to put the Liberal leaders under suspicion of intrigue with Washington, and to raise against them the British sentiment of the country. He was further aided by the fear, the natural fear, of many traders and manufacturers that the summary establishment of free trade with the United States would confuse their business connections, swamp their trade, and destroy their industries. Against all these disadvantages, however, the Liberal party broke even in Ontario and Quebec, while the adverse vote of the other provinces gave a total majority of less than thirty to the Administration. It is well, however, to say again that it was not a contest between British connection and continentalism, and that no appreciable percentage of the electors who voted for Liberal candidates, were animated by separatist motives, or less zealous than Sir John Macdonald for "the unity of the empire and the preservation of our commercial and political freedom."

There has still to be recorded one remarkable incident of this remarkable contest. Simultaneously with the returns of the polling, appeared a striking and disturbing letter from the Hon. Edward Blake. Throughout the contest Mr. Blake was silent, and from time to time it was hinted by Conservative papers and by speakers from Conservative platforms that he was at variance with Mr. Laurier and Sir

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Richard Cartwright, and hostile to the trade policy of the party. He had not accepted renomination in West Durham, and a letter which was said to have been read behind closed doors at the Liberal Convention at Bowmanville was withheld from the public. All the mystery and uncertainty which surrounded his attitude was dispelled by the communication which now appeared over his familiar signature. It is necessary to deal somewhat exhaustively with this statement. Mr. Blake said that in our then existing political condition a moderate revenue tariff approximating to free trade with all the world, and coupled with liberal provisions for reciprocal free trade with the States, would be, if practicable, our best arrangement. It seemed, however, to be the settled policy of the States to decline a limited reciprocity. What was best was therefore not now attainable. The Conservative policy he declared, had failed to accomplish the predictions of its promoters, and he uttered a sweeping condemnation of its tendencies and results.

“Its real tendency has been, as foretold twelve years ago, towards disintegration and annexation, instead of consolidation and the maintenance of that British connection of which they claim to be the special guardians. It has left us with a small population, a scanty immigration, and a North-West empty still; with enormous additions to our public debt and yearly charge, an extravagant system of expenditure, and an unjust and oppressive

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tariff; with restricted markets for our needs, whether to buy or to sell, and all the host of evils (greatly intensified by our special conditions) thence arising; with trade diverted from its natural into forced, and, therefore, less profitable channels, and with unfriendly relations and frowning tariff walls, ever more and more estranging us from the mighty English-speaking nation to the south—our neighbours and relations—with whom we ought to be, as it was promised that we should be, living in generous amity and liberal intercourse. Worse; far worse! It has left us with lowered standards of public virtue and a death-like apathy in public opinion; with racial, religious, and provincial animosities rather inflamed than soothed; with a subservient Parliament, an autocratic Executive, debauched constituencies, and corrupted and corrupting classes; with lessened self-reliance and increased dependence on the public chest and on legislative aids, and possessed withal by a boastful jingo spirit far enough removed from true manliness, loudly proclaiming unreal conditions and exaggerated sentiments, while actual facts and genuine opinions are suppressed. It has left us with our hands tied, our future compromised, and in such a plight that, whether we stand or move, we must run some risks which else we might have either declined or encountered with greater promise of success.”

He contended that fair traders and federationists,

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Tories and protectionists to the contrary notwithstanding, there was no reasonable prospect that the people of the United Kingdom would seriously engage in a struggle to which their whole Liberal party was opposed, and which their Conservative Prime Minister had likened to a civil war—a struggle to turn back for forty years the clock of time, and to achieve a social, industrial, and economic revolution, in order to reimpose protective duties which would effectively restrict, in favour of their own landlords, and of colonial producers like ourselves, the supply of their staple foods. Indeed, he said, it seemed difficult to conceive a suggestion which, coming from Canada, would be more calculated than this to alienate British feeling; even though accompanied by the sop of a delusive differential duty in favour of British manufactures. Under these circumstances, unrestricted free trade with the States, secured for a long term of years, would, even though accompanied by higher duties against the rest of the world than he for one admired, give us in practice the great blessing of a measure of free trade, much larger than we then enjoyed or could otherwise attain. This would greatly advance our most material interests, and help our natural, our largest, most substantial and most promising industries; it would create an influx of population and capital, and promote a rapid development of forces and materials now almost unused; in three words, it would give us men,

money, and markets. Obviously, however, any practicable plan involved differential duties against the United Kingdom and the rest of the world. Even with such duties, the gaps in our revenue, due to the loss of taxes on imports from the States and on imports from Britain to be replaced by home and United States manufactures, would be very great, incapable of being filled by a tea and coffee tax, a bill tax, and other available taxes of like nature, and by practicable economies. Direct taxation, even in its most promising form, a succession tax, was out of the question, and therefore of the financial problem presented by unrestricted reciprocity, he had seen no solution which would leave us without a great deficit. Any feasible plan of unrestricted reciprocity involved differential duties; and involved—as to the bulk by agreement, and as to much from the necessity of the case—the substantial assimilation in their leading features, of the tariffs of the two countries. The absence of agreement would give to each country power to disturb at will the industrial system of the other; and unrestricted reciprocity, without an agreed assimilation of duties, was an unsubstantial dream. For example, he said the States could not, without destroying their industrial system, admit free our woollen or iron manufactures, the produce of wool or iron freely imported by us from beyond seas; nor could we, without destroying ours, levy on raw materials higher duties than those laid by the

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States. Then, since any practicable arrangement substantially involved not only differential duties but a common tariff, unrestricted reciprocity became, in these its redeeming features, difficult to distinguish from commercial union.

Commercial union—establishing a common tariff, abolishing international custom houses and dividing the total duties between the two countries in agreed proportions—would be the more available, perhaps the only available plan. The tendency in Canada of unrestricted free trade with the States, high duties being maintained against the United Kingdom, would be towards political union, and the more successful the plan the stronger the tendency, both by reason of the community of interests, the intermingling of population, the more intimate business and social connections, and the trade and fiscal relations, amounting to dependency which it would create with the States, and of the greater isolation and divergency from Britain which it would produce; and also and especially through inconveniences experienced in the maintenance and apprehensions entertained as to the termination of the treaty. Therefore he said, “Whatever you or I may think on that head, whether we like or dislike, believe or disbelieve in political union, must we not agree that the subject is one of great moment, towards the practical settlement of which we should take no serious step without reflection, or in ignorance of what we are doing? Assuming that absolute

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free trade with the States, best described as commercial union, may and ought to come, I believe that it can and should come only as an incident, or at any rate, as a well-understood precursor of political union, for which indeed we should be able to make better terms before than after the surrender of our commercial independence. Then so believing—believing that the decision of the trade question involves that of the constitutional issue, for which you are unprepared and with which you do not even conceive yourselves to be dealing—how can I properly recommend you now to decide on commercial union !”¹

It is hardly necessary to say that the appearance of this letter was a profound and painful surprise to the Liberal party. There was light, perhaps, in the communication. Leading there was not. It was destructive, inconclusive, and embarrassing to the last degree. It was like Emerson’s New England road, which ended in a squirrel track and ran up a tree. Various interpretations were put upon the manifesto, and these were as conflicting as they were uncertain. *The Globe* interpreted the letter as a declaration for political union ; *The Empire* as a protest against the disloyal tendencies of the Liberal trade policy. Conflicting and contradictory efforts to find a positive policy in the letter led Mr. Blake to publish this additional statement: “The contra-

¹ Address of the Hon. Edward Blake to the members of the West Durham Reform Convention, March 5th, 1891.

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dictory inferences to which a sentence in my Durham letter, detached from its context, has in several quarters unexpectedly given rise, conquer my reluctance to trespass again so soon upon your columns ; and I crave space to say that I think political union with the States, though becoming our probable, is by no means our ideal, or as yet our inevitable future.”¹

All that can now be said is that only actual negotiations at Washington could have determined the exact force and justice of some of Mr. Blake’s criticisms. If unrestricted reciprocity was unworkable except upon the lines of commercial union, then the term was not properly expressive of the intentions of the Liberal leaders, and stood for a proposition which they had refused to accept. No one will impugn Mr. Blake’s motives, or deny the force of his reasoning and the courage of his utterance. It cannot be doubted that his letter was infinitely damaging to the Liberal party, and that he himself was deeply distressed over what he conceived to be the necessity for its publication. Notwithstanding the death of Sir John Macdonald and the revelations during the session of 1891 of gross frauds in some of the public departments, the bye-elections of 1892, which followed the work of the courts, resulted in almost continuous defeat for the candidates of the Opposition, and it is certain that Mr. Blake’s letter had its effect in the constituencies.

¹ Letter to the *Toronto Globe*, March 11th, 1891.

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Shortly after the general election, Sir Charles Tupper, Sir John Thompson, and the Hon. Geo. E. Foster proceeded to Washington with a view to negotiate for freer commercial intercourse. But their mission was abortive. In fact, negotiation was hardly attempted. The commissioners reported that the Government of the United States would not renew the Treaty of 1854, nor agree upon any commercial reciprocity which should be confined to natural products alone ; and that, in view of the great development in the industrial interests of the United States and of the changed condition of the commercial relations of the two countries since the Treaty of 1854 was negotiated, it was necessary that a list of manufactured goods should be included in the schedule of articles for free or other exchange under any reciprocity arrangements which could be made. The Hon. Geo. E. Foster declared some months afterwards that Mr. Blaine demanded discriminatory duties against British and foreign goods, and not only made it a condition that an agreed list of manufactures should be placed upon the free list, but also that a uniform tariff on the lines of the American tariff, should be adopted by the two countries.¹ Gen. John W. Foster, assistant Secretary of State under Mr. Blaine, who was present at the conferences with the Canadian commissioners, dissented from this statement. He said Mr. Blaine did not insist that a uniform tariff would

¹ Ottawa despatch to the *Toronto Empire*, December 11th, 1892.

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be necessary, nor much less, that it should be on the lines of the existing United States tariff. He did ask that the schedule should not be confined to natural products, but should include an agreed list of manufactured goods, and that the reciprocity should be confined to Canada and the United States. At any rate the terms were such as the Canadian commissioners could not accept, and the conferences abruptly terminated.

The real disposition of Washington was manifested in the McKinley Bill, which imposed prohibitory taxes upon our natural products and greatly incensed Canadian opinion against the United States. True, an incipient agitation for political union arose in Ontario, but it was not far-reaching, and its force was soon spent. President Harrison's threat to suspend the bonding privilege because tolls were imposed upon American vessels passing through the Canadian canals, notwithstanding that the Washington Government had never sought to secure for Canada the free use of the State canals as provided by the stipulations of the Washington Treaty, still further estranged relations between the two countries, while the promise of economic relief through increasing exports to Great Britain steadied Canadian opinion and reconciled Canadian producers to exclusion from the American market. These and other circumstances combined to modify the agitation for reciprocity, and when the National Liberal Convention met in Ottawa in June, 1893,

a trade plank was adopted which more clearly expressed the feeling of the Liberal party, and invalidated the more serious attacks which had been made upon the policy of unrestricted free trade with the United States. This thoroughly representative and thoroughly national convention declared that the tariff should be so arranged as to promote freer trade with the whole world, and more particularly with Great Britain and the United States, and further: "That having regard to the prosperity of Canada and the United States as adjoining countries, with many mutual interests, it is desirable that there should be the most friendly relations and broad and liberal trade intercourse between them; that the interests alike of the Dominion and of the Empire would be materially advanced by the establishing of such relations; that the period of the old reciprocity treaty was one of marked prosperity to the British North American colonies; that the pretext under which the Government appealed to the country in 1891 respecting negotiation for a treaty with the United States was misleading and dishonest and intended to deceive the electorate; that no sincere effort has been made by them to obtain a treaty, but that on the contrary, it is manifest that the present Government, controlled as they are by monopolies and combines, are not desirous of securing such a treaty; that the first step towards obtaining the end in view is to place a party in power who are sincerely desirous

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of promoting a treaty on terms honourable to both countries; that a fair and liberal reciprocity treaty would develop the great natural resources of Canada, would enormously increase the trade and commerce between the two countries, would tend to encourage friendly relations between the two peoples, would remove many causes which have in the past provoked irritation and trouble to the Governments of both countries, and would promote those kindly relations between the Empire and the Republic which afford the best guarantee for peace and prosperity; that the Liberal party is prepared to enter into negotiations with a view to obtaining such a treaty, including a well-considered list of manufactured articles, and we are satisfied that any treaty so arranged will receive the assent of Her Majesty's Government, without whose approval no treaty can be made."

This declaration of policy healed the breach between Mr. Blake and the Liberal party. He intimated his approval and satisfaction to his old constituents, and in a speech at Strathroy in 1897 frankly restated his position, or rather interpreted his famous letter to the Liberals of West Durham. He pointed out that in 1891 the Liberal party went to the country with the policy of unrestricted reciprocity with the United States, or continental free trade. He fully recognized, as he had long recognized, the enormous and immediate advantage of the greatest practicable freedom of trade

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with all countries, and most particularly with the country which was coterminous with ours; yet he was convinced, after the most careful consideration, that a policy which necessarily involved a great and general discrimination against Great Britain was not merely irreconcilable with our financial requirements, swollen as these had become, but also included of necessity the assimilation of our tariff with the tariff of the neighbouring Republic. He was satisfied that it would tend to produce a bad feeling in Great Britain, that it would tend towards severance from that country and to political union with the United States, and his belief was that his fellow-countrymen did not apprehend these results and were not prepared to adopt these conclusions. Leading friends of his differed wholly from these views. The election was suddenly precipitated in advance of the usual period, and he found himself in a painful dilemma. It was impossible for him to stand for Parliament without stating frankly to his constituents, as he had always done, the views he held upon public questions, and it was equally impossible for him, in the very crisis of a general election, to state those opinions without doing serious damage to friends whom he had long served and whom he deeply loved. He had, therefore, decided upon the whole that the course he had best pursue was one of silence for the time, which involved giving up the dearest aspirations of his own life, and his retire-

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ment from Parliament. At that juncture the opportunity, unsought and unexpected, presented itself, which opened the door to his services elsewhere, which had been closed in the country to which he belonged. A year later the Liberal party held a great convention, at which they laid down a fresh policy on the trade question, to which generally it was his great pleasure to give his adhesion, for, indeed, it was that which he had always maintained himself.¹

This is, at least, a satisfactory interpretation of the West Durham letter, even though it discovers tendencies in the policy of unrestricted reciprocity, and argues conclusions from the attitude of the Liberal party which Mr. Blake's successors in the direction of the party organization could not accept as the necessary consequences of their programme as developed in caucus and presented to the country.

¹ Speech at Strathroy, November 24th, 1897.

CHAPTER XXIII

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IT is convenient to consider now the efforts made by the Liberal Ministry which came into office in 1896 to give effect to the resolutions of the national convention, in so far as concerns trade with the United States. During Mr. Cleveland's second Administration, the tariff duties against Canadian products were materially lowered. But Mr. McKinley succeeded to the Presidency in 1896, and a Republican Congress restored the prohibitory tariff against Canada. The appointment of the Joint High Commission, however, arose directly out of the desire of the United States to acquire still more exclusive ownership of the Alaskan seal fisheries. The Washington Government was not at all content with the decision of the Paris arbitration, which provided in effect that as no exclusive rights within the Behring Sea had been conferred upon Russia or exercised by her prior to the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867, therefore Canada should have equal right of access to the Behring Sea with the United States. Regulations were also established under the award of Paris requiring that seals should be captured only at certain seasons, under certain conditions, and with

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stipulated weapons to be used in the fisheries. The United States claimed that under these regulations seal life was rapidly disappearing from Behring Sea. Accordingly, in November, 1897, experts from both countries considered conditions in the seal fishing grounds, and reported that: "It was not possible during the continuance of the conservative methods at present in force upon the Pribyloff Island for the further safeguarding of the protected zone at sea, that any pelagic killing could result in the actual extermination of the species."

Upon the publication of this report, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Louis Davies visited Washington. During the consideration of the position of the seal fisheries, it was proposed that the whole series of open questions between the United States and Canada should be taken up and settled. This proposition was mutually accepted, and an understanding reached as to the subjects to be discussed. These were: (1) the Alaskan and Atlantic fisheries; (2) the Alaskan boundary; (3) the trade relations of the two countries; (4) the agreement limiting the number of war ships on the Great Lakes; (5) the alien labour laws; (6) the bonding privileges; (7) the preservation of fish in contiguous waters; (8) the conveyance of prisoners through the territory of either nation by the officers of the other; (9) reciprocity in wrecking.

A Joint High Commission was subsequently constituted, with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Richard

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Cartwright, Sir Louis Davies, Mr. John Charlton, M.P., and Lord Herschell as the British Plenipotentiaries; Sir James Winter, as the representative of Newfoundland; and Senator Fairbanks of Indiana, Senator Gray of Delaware, the Hon. J. W. Foster, Congressman Dingley of Maine, and Mr. J. A. Kasson and Mr. T. Jefferson Coolidge of the State Department, as the representatives of the United States. Mr. Dingley died while the Commission was sitting, and was replaced by Congressman Sareno Payne of New York State. Baron Herschell, too, who was made chairman of the Commission, met with an accident at Washington and died, just as the Commission had completed its labours. It is proper to say that Mr. Dingley, although a stalwart protectionist and the author of the tariff measure which still bears so heavily against Canadian products, manifested a large and tolerant spirit in his treatment of many of the questions which came under the purview of the Commission; while Canada found Lord Herschell a liberal and resolute champion of her contentions. As Sir Wilfrid Laurier said in the House of Commons, "He fought for Canada not only with enthusiasm, but with conviction and devotion."

The Commission sat at Quebec from August 23rd until October 10th, 1898, and subsequently at Washington from November 9th, 1898, until February 20th, 1899, when an adjournment was made without practical results from its deliberations.

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During the prolonged sittings of the Commission, laborious and exhaustive examination was made of many of the subjects under review; and time and again there seemed prospect of a comprehensive settlement of the disputed questions between the two countries. It is apparent from the schedule of subjects considered that the United States sought vastly greater concessions from Canada than the British Provinces claimed from the Republic. We sought little beyond freer access to American markets, and a more satisfactory determination of our rights in the Atlantic fisheries, and these boons the American commissioners were very reluctant to concede. They naturally desired that the treaty should cover a large schedule of manufactured goods, and we were equally concerned for the removal of American duties on natural products. But Mr. Dingley and his associates knew that protectionist sentiment was firmly rooted in the agricultural communities of the United States, and particularly among the farmers of the border counties, while the Canadian commissioners were bound to remember that protectionism in Canada had its stronghold in the manufacturing classes. Progress was slow and difficult; but before the Commission arose it was understood that a schedule had been arranged which provided practically for free trade in the products of the mines, for a considerable schedule of agricultural products, and for a careful and judicious readjustment of the duties on certain manufactures.

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The negotiations for reciprocity in wrecking were less successful. Under existing regulations, if a Canadian ship goes ashore in American waters, she can be assisted only by an American wrecking crew operating in an American vessel, and Canada naturally maintains the same regulations against American vessels wrecked in Canadian waters. It is a barbarous survival of mediæval protectionism, but even if a treaty had been drafted by the Commission, it is doubtful if it would have covered reciprocal wrecking. The treaty would, however, have provided regulations for fish preservation by the establishment of uniform close seasons on the Great Lakes and all contiguous waters, and for restocking the sources of supply.

A thorough consideration was had of the agreement which limits the number of war-vessels to be maintained on the Great Lakes by Great Britain and the United States. This convention arose out of the war of 1812-14, when some sanguinary conflicts occurred on the lakes between British and American vessels. With the object of preventing a costly competition for their control by the maintenance of fleets thereon, a convention was concluded in 1817, under which His Britannic Majesty and the Government of the United States agreed that only four small vessels of a definite size should be maintained upon such waters. This convention was never embodied in a treaty, and its provisions were terminable upon six months'

notice by either party thereto. The agreement forbade not only the maintenance but the construction of war-vessels. This, however, mattered very little until ship-building industries sprang up at Cleveland and other American ports on the lakes. The ship-builders at these ports strongly urged that they be permitted to compete with the ship-builders on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts in the construction of American war-vessels, and as a preliminary to this they made a demand that the convention of 1817 be abrogated. The demand was not quite reasonable in consideration of the fact that war-vessels built in American ports on the lakes could reach the open sea only through Canadian canals which could be closed to them; but the ship-builders probably meant to secure passage-way to the sea for such vessels by the threat that if this were not granted the United States would construct and maintain a fleet on the lakes. Another reason urged for the abrogation of the convention of 1817 was that in the event of war over one hundred vessels of the British navy are of sufficiently light draught to pass through the Canadian canals. These vessels could not be opposed by American war-vessels, and would completely dominate the lakes. The British commissioners were reluctant to disturb the old convention, which of course the United States could easily terminate; but in return for equivalent concessions elsewhere, on the special advice of Lord Herschell, they might

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possibly have agreed to allow passage through the Canadian canals of war-vessels partially constructed on the upper lakes, but still unarmoured and unequipped. There was no more delicate point in the negotiations, and the British commissioners well understood that Canadian feeling on the subject was particularly sensitive and ebullient.

It was also desired to abolish the alien labour laws and to remove all restrictions upon artisans and labourers passing from one country to the other in search of employment. The original intention of the Alien Labour Law of the United States was to prevent aliens coming in under contract and taking the place of workmen on strike. The law was carelessly drafted, and in 1887-88, the officers charged with its enforcement at Detroit and Buffalo took advantage of the powers conferred to stop Canadians entering the States in search of employment. In cases where families were left behind in Canada, the workman was either deported or required to take his household to the United States. After a lengthy agitation a similar law was placed upon the Canadian statute book in 1897. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, however, expressly stated that the law should apply only to countries which enforced alien labour regulations against Canadians, and that whenever these regulations should be removed the Canadian law would become inoperative. The chief prosecutions under the Canadian law have been in cases where labourers were brought

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in under contract during disputes between employers and employed. In some cases, however, in Northern Ontario, men have been deported who had refused to bring their families over and settle in Canada as permanent citizens. Canada's contention in the negotiations was that the repeal of the law on both sides would be advantageous, and the American attitude seems to have been cordial and sympathetic.

The Commission had also to consider the various regulations adopted from time to time for the passing of goods in bond through adjacent territories of the United States and Canada. Before the coming of railways the bulk of the supplies imported into Upper Canada were brought in during the summer season by the St. Lawrence, which was also the great highway for exports destined for Europe. It was obvious that a port shut up for six months of the year did not afford adequate means of communication, and as early as 1836 there was an agitation in Canada for the right of importing goods in bond from Europe by New York and other American ports. An agreement was made some time afterwards, by which this privilege was obtained, but it was not until 1853 that exportation in bond was granted. The traffic ever since has been carried on in greatly increasing volume, and it would now be difficult, except under stress of national self-preservation, to bring in all the goods imported from Europe and send out the products exported

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by means of the St. Lawrence during the season of navigation, and through St. John and Halifax and other ports in the Maritime Provinces during the winter. From Canada's point of view the conclusion of a permanent bonding arrangement in any treaty intended to be a final settlement between the two countries became a necessity. The bridging of the Niagara gorge and the opening up of vast territories in the American north-west, made possible a similar bonding arrangement, by which American imports from England for the west, and products moving from the west to the eastern States and to Europe, passed through Canada, entering at Niagara, and leaving Canadian territory at Detroit and Sarnia. Ontario juts so far south that this was regarded as a shorter and more convenient route between the east and west. Many American publicists and statesmen hold that the freight rates from the north-western States would be greatly increased were the bonding privilege through Canada cut off; and hence the American west is quite as strongly in favour of the continuation of the bonding arrangements with Canada as are the Canadians. The various proposals for the construction and operation of short grain routes from the western States to Europe almost all involve passage in bond through Canadian canals or across Ontario from such ports as Parry Sound, Midland, Owen Sound, and Collingwood to the St. Lawrence and to Boston and

Portland. In connection with the bonding privilege there was also involved the question of the haulage of goods destined for the New York and other eastern markets by the Canadian Pacific Railway from points of entry on the Pacific, and similarly of goods for eastern Canadian points landed at San Francisco. More than once the threat of suspension of the bonding privilege has been held over Canada by the Washington Government, and only substantial concessions on the part of Canada could have induced the American commissioners to consent to the permanent and unassailable establishment of bonding arrangements.

A great concession was sought from Canada in connection with the fur fisheries in pursuance of the determined policy of the United States to make a closed lake of Behring Sea. The presence on the Commission of Mr. Foster, who was chief counsel for the United States at the Paris Arbitration, and the chief representative of this feature of American policy, made it practically certain that no substantial adjustment of other questions could be effected, if at this point the British commissioners maintained an illiberal attitude. The American proposals were in effect that Canada should retire from pelagic sealing in Behring Sea, and that Canadian vessel owners and other persons interested in the pelagic sealing industry should receive compensation from the American Government. Negotiations proceeded so far that a schedule was drawn up fixing

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the amount to be paid by the United States in the event of Canada withdrawing from pelagic sealing, and if equivalent concessions had been secured elsewhere the British commissioners would probably have accepted the draft agreement. If we contrast the attitude of the United States towards the fur fisheries of the Pacific with their determined non-recognition of Canadian treaty rights in the fisheries of the Atlantic coasts, we shall receive an illuminative exposition of American policy, and an explanation of the prejudiced manifestations against the Republic which sometimes reach the surface in Canada.

It was, however, the question of the boundary between Canada and Alaska which finally determined the fate of the negotiations. There was here involved the delimitation of the boundary along that portion of Alaska, from Mount St. Elias to the southern extremity of Prince of Wales Island, known as the coast strip. Under the treaties between Russia and Great Britain of 1825, and between Russia and the United States in 1867, it was provided that the line of demarcation should follow the summit of the mountains parallel to the coast, and that when these mountains should prove to be at a distance of over ten leagues from the ocean, the boundary should be formed by a line parallel to the windings of the coast, and which should never exceed a distance of ten marine leagues therefrom. Canada claimed that there was a well-defined coast

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range which should form the boundary, and that following this line the greater part of the Lynn canal should be in Canadian territory. The United States in effect claimed that the boundary should follow the sinuosities of the coast, thus leaving the great inlets and the entire coast line in American possession. The provisions of this treaty had never been carried out. The boundary had remained undefined and no special inconvenience had resulted until the discovery of gold in the Klondyke in 1897. The only available winter route to the new gold fields lay by the Lynn Canal and over the Alaskan mountains. The Americans established a port at the head of the Lynn Canal, and claimed jurisdiction. They had already been in practical occupation of this territory, but the fact that all Canadian goods intended for the Klondyke had to be transhipped through an American port in the disputed district and under vexatious regulations, made the question of the boundary one of immediate importance. Pending the final decision a *modus vivendi* has been in operation, under which the summit of the range at the head of the Lynn Canal is regarded as a provisional boundary, while the Americans retain possession of the slope towards the head of the canal.

Here the attitude of the United States was unyielding. The British commissioners offered as a compromise to leave Dyea and Skagway in possession of the United States if the American

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commissioners would agree that Canada should retain Pyramid Harbour, and so secure a highway into the Yukon district. This proposition was designed to make common water of the Lynn Canal, while leaving much of the territory in dispute to the United States. The proposal was rejected by the American representatives, and Canada then offered to refer the whole question to arbitration in order to ascertain the true boundary under the Anglo-Russian treaty. The British commissioners suggested that the arbitrators should be three jurists of repute, one to be named by the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council, one to be appointed by the President of the United States, and the third to be a high international authority who would act as umpire. This proposition was also rejected, and the American plenipotentiaries then suggested a tribunal of six jurists, three of whom should be appointed by the United States and three by Great Britain. In reply, Canada had to say that this proposal did not "provide a tribunal which would necessarily, and in the possible event of differences of opinion, finally dispose of the question." Canada offered to agree to an arbitration in the very terms of the reference for the settlement of the dispute over the Venezuelan boundary which was imposed upon Great Britain by the disturbing message of President Cleveland. But in vain. No basis for an arbitration could be reached. The American commissioners even

objected to the selection of an European umpire, and sought, indeed, to select for the presidency of the board of arbitration a jurist from the South American republics. In the judgment of the British commissioners it was useless to settle only a few minor questions where the balance of advantage would go to the United States. They, therefore, reported that they were unwilling to proceed "until the boundary question had been disposed of, either by agreement or reference to arbitration."

It is within the truth to say that the spirit of Congress was adverse to any liberal agreement with Canada either for the extension of trade, or for the adjustment of other disturbing questions. If Mr. McKinley and Sir Wilfrid Laurier could have determined the issue of the negotiations, a large and beneficent arrangement would probably have resulted. But Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues learned what Sir John Macdonald in consequence of his long enduring term of office in Canada so well understood,—they learned that the Republican leaders of the United States are stubbornly and invincibly protectionist, that American policy is essentially exclusive and autocratic, that the American temper resents official dealing with foreign communities, and that a treaty-making prerogative which depends for its efficiency upon a legislative body independent of the executive, and subject to all the passions and prejudices of an arrogant democracy, is at most a feeble and timid organ of Government.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SCHOOL QUESTION

IT is doubtful if the Equal Rights organization left any abiding impress upon the legislation of Ontario or Quebec, but to that movement can be traced the abolition of denominational schools, and of the use of French as an official language in Manitoba. The movement began in an agitation to force disallowance of an act of the Quebec Legislature, and ended in an agitation to prevent interference with an act of the Manitoba Legislature. It is true also that the arguments which influenced Parliament against disallowance of the Jesuit Estates' Act were very much the arguments which protected the Legislature and people of Manitoba from interference by the federal authority. The first word in an agitation which shook all Canada in its stormy progress, and finally overturned a Government at Ottawa, was spoken in 1889 by the Hon. Joseph Martin, Attorney-General of Manitoba, at a meeting in Portage la Prairie, at which he and Mr. D'Alton McCarthy were the chief speakers. Mr. McCarthy was fresh from attack upon the Separate School system of Ontario, and inspired by the brief but formidable ascendancy of the Equal Rights movement. When he had advanced his familiar arguments against ecclesiastical influence

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in Canadian politics, the evils of a sectarian school system, and the denationalizing tendency of dual language, Mr. Martin intervened with the practical and far-reaching announcement that the provincial Government had determined to abolish the official use of French in the Legislature and courts of the province, and to establish a national and non-sectarian school system. He added that if the Constitution prevented the enactment of the legislation the provincial Government would appeal to the Imperial authorities for its amendment.¹ The statement was generally unexpected, and was as disturbing as it was revolutionary. The few who had thought upon the question had the general impression that Separate Schools in Manitoba were protected by constitutional guarantees as in Ontario and Quebec, and that no Government subject to the common political influences would be likely to disturb the system. There was likewise the higher consideration that a constitutional compact should not be lightly violated, and that the Manitoba Act of Union, like the Confederation Settlement, was a conclusive determination, in so far as the acts applied, of the rights of the religious minorities to maintain a Separate School system, and to devote their proportion of the school taxes to the support of denominational education.²

¹ Speech of the Hon. Joseph Martin at Portage la Prairie, August 5th, 1889.

² Before Mr. Martin spoke at Portage la Prairie there were intimations more or less direct of the intention of the Manitoba Govern-

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The Manitoba Government, however, proceeded to give legislative effect to Mr. Martin's declaration, and at the session of 1890 passed acts abolishing the Roman Catholic schools and establishing a non-sectarian system of education throughout the province. Legal proceedings were at once instituted on behalf of the Roman Catholics to determine the constitutionality of this legislation, and a public issue of the first consequence arose in provincial and in national politics. The demand for disallowance of the provincial statutes was refused at Ottawa, and it remained for the courts to determine if the acts were within the competence of the Legislature, and

ment to abolish Separate Schools and the official use of French. The first distinct announcement of the Greenway programme appeared in the *Winnipeg Sun*. A despatch to the *Toronto Mail* of August 2nd, 1889, said, "*The Sun* to-night says the next session of the local Legislature promises to be the most interesting and exciting ever held in the province. The local Government have resolved to take the bull by the horns and to accept Mr. D'Alton McCarthy's advice of adopting a fight with the ballot. Thus it is understood to be the settled policy of the Government to introduce a measure at the next session abolishing dual languages, that is, the use of the French language in the province. Documents and statutes will be printed only in the English language. The Government have also decided to grapple with the Separate School question, and means will be advised to knock them out, despite the reading of the law bearing on the question. An educational measure revolutionizing the whole system in the province will be introduced. The Board of Education will be wiped out and the portfolio of Minister of Education will likely be taken by one of the present Ministers, as there is no desire to create a fifth salaried Minister. He will have a deputy, who will perform duties very similar to those of the Superintendent of Education. By a new act the position of Superintendent of Education will be wiped out. It is understood that he will receive notice to that effect in a few days."

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if so, whether or not the federal power could intervene to restore to the Roman Catholics of the province the privileges of which they had been deprived.

There was no public system of education in Manitoba prior to the organization of the province in 1870, and such denominational schools as existed were supported by the voluntary contributions of the various communions. But in 1871 a system of education was established, which was distinctly denominational, and under which the Catholics of Manitoba received as liberal treatment as the Catholics of Ontario and the Protestants of Quebec. This system, as stated, was abolished in 1890, and succeeded by the acts whose constitutionality was now to be determined. The first sub-section of the twenty-second section of the Manitoba Act declares that the province shall not have power to pass any legislation which "shall prejudicially affect any right or privilege with respect to denominational schools which any class of persons have by law or practice in the province at the Union." This was doubtless intended to give a constitutional guarantee for Separate Schools in Manitoba; but when the appeal taken by the Catholic minority had made its way through the Canadian courts to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, it was there decided that the legislation of 1890 was constitutional inasmuch as the only right or privilege which Roman Catholics then enjoyed was the right or privilege of

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establishing such schools as they preferred, and maintaining these by their own contributions.

Thereupon a second appeal was taken under sub-section two of the twenty-second section of the Manitoba Act, which provides that, "An appeal shall lie to the Governor-General-in-Council from any act or decision of the Legislature of the province or of any provincial authority, affecting any right or privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic minority of the Queen's subjects in relation to education." The Supreme Court decided that even under this section no right of interference was vested in the central Government, and mainly upon the grounds that every presumption must be made in favour of the constitutional right of a legislative body to repeal the laws which it has itself enacted, and that an enactment irrevocably held by the Judicial Committee to be *intra vires*, could not have illegally affected any of the rights and privileges of the Catholic minority. The Judicial Committee, however, reversed this judgment, and found that the Governor-General-in-Council had jurisdiction in the premises, but added: "The particular course to be pursued must be determined by the authorities to whom it has been committed by the statute. It is not for this tribunal to intimate the precise steps to be taken. Their general character is sufficiently defined by the third sub-section of section twenty-two of the Manitoba Act." This sub-section provides for action by the Governor-General-

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in-Council in case a provincial Government fails or refuses to remedy grievances of a religious minority occasioned by provincial legislation, and authorizes the Parliament of Canada to make remedial laws for the due execution of such measures as may be adjudged necessary in the circumstances. But while the Judicial Committee declined to give explicit direction to the federal authority, they closed their judgment with these pregnant sentences: "It is certainly not essential that the statutes repealed by the Act of 1890 should be re-enacted, or that the precise provisions of these statutes should again be made law. The system of education embodied in the Acts of 1890 no doubt commends itself to, and adequately supplies the wants of, the great majority of the inhabitants of the province. All legitimate ground of complaint would be removed if that system were supplemented by provisions which would remove the grievances upon which the appeal is founded, and were modified so far as might be necessary to give effect to these provisions."

This judgment of the Privy Council placed the federal Government in a position of extraordinary difficulty. The authorities of Manitoba were bound to resist the restoration of the Separate School system by federal action, and Dominion Ministers, whether they acted or refused to act, must be exposed to grave political danger. The Roman Catholic ecclesiastics were in the mood to demand full restoration of the privileges of which the Cath-

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olic people had been deprived, while influential elements in the Conservative party were in complete sympathy with the action of Manitoba, and resolutely opposed to federal intervention. For years the Conservative party of Ontario under Mr. Meredith, had agitated for a larger measure of public control over Catholic schools, and the attitude of many of his supporters menaced the very existence of the system. There were still manifestations of that extraordinary condition of public feeling which found expression in the bigoted and intolerant crusade of the Protestant Protective Association, while Mr. McCarthy and the element he represented had a commanding influence in many constituencies.¹ It was necessary not only to

¹ The P.P.A., as it was called, was transplanted into Canada from the United States. Its avowed object was to challenge the so-called "solid Catholic vote." It was particularly active in municipal elections in Toronto, Hamilton, and other cities in Ontario. It threw its whole strength against the Liberal Government of the province in the general election of 1894, and was professedly hostile to Sir John Thompson. The organization demanded Government inspection of convents and religious institutions and the abolition of Separate Schools. The obligation required members to declare they would not allow a Roman Catholic to enter the Order; would not employ a Roman Catholic in any capacity if the services of a Protestant could be secured; would not aid in building or maintaining by their resources any Roman Catholic church or institution; would do all in their power to retard and break down the power of the Pope; would not enter into any controversy with a Roman Catholic upon the subject of the Order; would refuse to enter into any agreement with a Roman Catholic to strike or create a disturbance whereby Roman Catholic employees might undermine and replace the Protestants; that in all grievances they would seek only Protestants, and counsel with them to the exclusion of all Roman Catholics; that they would not countenance the nomination in any caucus

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turn the Conservatives of Ontario from the attack upon Separate Schools and clerical influence, but to obtain their assent to a political alliance with the Catholic hierarchy, and their active aid and sympathy for a policy designed to force Separate Schools upon Manitoba. Upon the other hand 40 per cent. of the population of Canada adhered to the Catholic Church, and it could only be expected that the mass of Catholics would sympathize with their ecclesiastics and with their co-religionists in the western province. A striking incident of the situation was that Mr. Mackenzie Bowell, one of the leaders of the Orange Association, had succeeded to the premiership upon the death of Sir John Thompson, and that the sentiment of the Order in Manitoba and throughout Canada in fidelity to its historical faiths and traditions, was necessarily antagonistic to State recognition and State support of sectarian—and more particularly of Roman Catholic—institutions.

It has been understood that Sir John Thompson had a definite policy for the determination of the Manitoba School question, and it is certain that he was less concerned than many of his contemporaries over the prospect of its intrusion into federal politics. Nothing in his speeches goes beyond the declaration that the Government would stand by or convention of a Roman Catholic for any office in the gift of the Canadian people; and would not vote for nor counsel others to vote for any Roman Catholic; and would endeavour at all times to place the political positions of the Government in the hands of Protestants.

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the constitutional law of the country.¹ All that he said on the subject was characterized by that cool-headedness and firm judicial temper for which he was distinguished. He was conscious, no doubt, of the suspicions to which a Roman Catholic must be exposed in dealing with such a question; and while there can be no reason to think that he would have shrunk from any proper defence of the interests of his Church, he would probably have been slow to strain the Constitution in order to serve his co-religionists. There was the simple truth in the statement which he made on one occasion, that he did not occupy his responsible position in the country through any effort of his own, or through any struggle of his for political distinction; and his ascendancy in his own Cabinet was so complete, and his influence with the sober-minded elements of the nation so great, that if he could not have achieved a pacific and conciliatory settlement of the school question he would at least have prevented the great schism in the Ministry and have moderated the arrogance and intolerance of the Catholic bishops who assumed to dictate the policy of the country. He had well said that moral and religious problems which come home to the convictions of the people are dangerous to the welfare of the State if approached in any partisan or political spirit; and that the only safe guide

¹ Speech at the annual banquet of the Toronto Board of Trade, January 5th, 1893.

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to any safe result which he could see in such a connection was the exercise of toleration and concession so far as it did not infringe upon principle.¹ This, however, was not the spirit in which the agitation for the restoration of Separate Schools in Manitoba was conducted, and this was not the spirit in which the Bowell Administration undertook to deal with the province.

The first step taken by the federal Ministers consequent upon the judgment of the Privy Council on January 29th, 1895, was not to seek by negotiation for a basis of compromise with the provincial authorities, and for such modification of the provincial statutes as would remove established grievances, but to hear argument as to whether or not a remedial order should issue, and to decide without actual investigation into conditions in Manitoba, as to what measure of redress for the minority they should demand. Argument in accordance with this determination was made before a committee of the Privy Council by Mr. J. S. Ewart, Q.C., of Winnipeg, in behalf of the Catholic minority, and by Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, Q.C., in behalf of the Manitoba Government. No new facts were adduced and the chief, perhaps the only result of the proceeding, was to intensify sectarian spirit on either side of the controversy, and widen the quarrel between the province and the Dominion.

¹ Mr. J. Castell Hopkins' "Life and Work of Sir John Thompson," pages 303, 304.

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The recommendation of the Committee of Council was put into the form of a remedial order, and the ungracious and defiant deliverance was served upon the Government of Manitoba. The Remedial Order declared that: "It seems requisite that the system of education embodied in the two Acts of 1890 shall be supplemented by a provincial act or acts which will restore to the Roman Catholic minority the rights and privileges of which such minority has been deprived," and the provincial Legislature was asked to consider whether its action should be permitted to be such as, while refusing to redress a grievance which the highest court in the Empire had declared to exist, might compel Parliament to give relief of which under the Constitution the provincial Legislature was the proper and primary source, and thereby permanently divest itself in a very large measure of its authority, and so establish in the province an educational system, which no matter what changes might take place in the circumstances of the country or the views of the people, could not be altered or repealed. The Order commanded Manitoba to restore to the Roman Catholic minority the rights and privileges of which they had been deprived, and to modify the acts of 1890 so far, and so far only, as might be necessary to give effect to the provisions restoring: (a) The right to maintain Roman Catholic schools in the manner provided for by the statutes repealed in 1890; (b) the right to share proportionately in any

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grant made out of the public funds for the purposes of education; and (c) the right of exemption of Catholics from all payment or contribution to the support of any other schools. This was the language of menace and of intimidation, and was ill-fitted to moderate public feeling in the province or to form a good disposition for the consideration of a subject which touched the passions and prejudices of a very great body of the citizens.

In May, Lord Aberdeen summoned Mr. Greenway, the Premier, and Mr. Sifton, the Attorney-General of Manitoba, to Ottawa, where they had various conferences with the Governor-General. It was reported that as a result of these conferences a Joint Commission would be appointed to consider the defects of the old provincial system of education and to recommend such modifications and amendments of the existing system as would meet any well grounded complaints of the Catholic people. The negotiations came to nothing, however, and in June the Legislature of Manitoba met in special session and adopted a memorial in reply to the Remedial Order. It is not too much to say that the case throughout was handled for Manitoba with consummate skill and judgment, and that for clearness, directness, simplicity, and dignity, nothing in the literature of the controversy excels the despatches of the provincial Administration in explanation and defence of its position. The memorial now sent down to Ottawa said that compliance

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with the terms of the Remedial Order would restore Catholic Separate Schools, with no more satisfactory guarantee for their efficiency than existed prior to 1890. These schools as conducted under the Roman Catholic section of the Board of Education were inefficient, and did not possess the attributes of modern Public Schools. Their conduct, management, and regulation were defective, and as a result of leaving a large section of the population with no better means of education than was thus supplied, many people grew up in a state of illiteracy. It was pointed out that Manitoba laboured under great difficulties in maintaining an efficient system of primary education. The school taxes bore heavily upon the people. The large amount of land which was exempt from school taxes, and the great extent of country over which the small population was scattered, presented obstacles to efficiency and progress. The reforms effected in 1890 had given a strong impetus to educational work, but the difficulties which were inherent in the circumstances had constantly to be met. It was obvious that the establishment of a set of Roman Catholic schools, followed by a set of Anglican schools, and possibly Mennonite, Icelandic and other schools, would so impair the existing system that any approach to even the prevailing general standard of efficiency would be quite impossible. The provincial Ministers said they contemplated the inauguration of such a state of affairs with grave apprehension, and had

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no hesitation in saying that there could not be suggested any measure which to their minds would more seriously imperil the development of the province.

They insisted that when the Remedial Order was made there was not available to the federal Government full and accurate information as to the working of the former system of schools in Manitoba, and that there was also lacking the means of forming a correct judgment as to the effect upon the province of the changes which the order demanded. They submitted that it was not yet too late to make a full and deliberate investigation of the whole subject, and they declared that should such a course be adopted they would cheerfully assist in affording the most complete information available. An investigation of such a kind would furnish a substantial basis of fact upon which conclusions could be formed with a reasonable degree of certainty. It was of the first consequence that no hasty action should be taken in a matter which involved the religious feelings and convictions of different classes of the people of Canada and the educational interests of a province which was expected to become one of the most important in the Dominion.

This moderate and conciliatory memorial was met by a rejoinder from the Ottawa Government which traversed much of the ground covered by the Remedial Order. The reply, while less peremptory

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in its tone and less definite in its demand, was substantially a refusal to make investigation into conditions in the province, and substantially an argument for the restoration of the denominational school system. It was contended that the religious opinions and rights which had been recognized in the judgment of the Privy Council could be sufficiently met by the Legislature without impairing the efficiency, or proper conduct, management, and regulation of the Public Schools; and the rejoinder also embodied a statement made in Parliament by the Hon. George E. Foster, that if the Manitoba Government failed to make a settlement of the question which would be reasonably satisfactory to the Catholic minority the Dominion Parliament would be called together not later than the first Thursday of January, 1896, and that the Dominion Government would then be prepared to introduce and press to a conclusion such legislation as would afford an adequate measure of relief to the minority based upon the lines of the judgment of the Privy Council and the Remedial Order.¹

Throughout all the early period of this disturbing controversy, Mr. Laurier maintained a discreet and judicial attitude. The position of the leader of the Opposition was not less difficult than that of the federal Ministers. He did not believe that a policy of coercion could succeed. He was thoroughly

¹ Hansard, July 8th, 1895, page 3,997.

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persuaded that sympathetic treatment of minorities was conducive to national stability and national solidarity. He shrank from a quarrel with the Church to which he belonged. He could not think that the forces which the Remedial Order would range behind the Government could be successfully resisted. He had fought many a battle against presumptuous federal interference with provincial legislation; and while bound to admit that Manitoba's control over education was limited by constitutional restrictions, he was yet convinced that only by the free action of the Legislature could the Catholic people receive effective and enduring redress of any grievances arising out of the abolition of the Separate School system. He could not argue the question as one of abstract provincial rights, nor could he contend for an absolute restoration of Separate Schools, if it could be established that under the Public School system the conscientious convictions of Roman Catholics were fairly respected. Thus he favoured investigation, condemned the policy of the Remedial Order, and pleaded for a settlement by compromise and conciliation.¹

Dealing in Parliament with the statement of Archbishop Taché, that the schools created by the provincial Acts of 1890 were in fact Protestant rather than non-sectarian, he held that if the statement were well founded, injustice was done, and

¹ Hansard, March 8th, 1893, pages 1,997-1,998.

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redress should not be withheld.¹ He persistently declared his faith in the liberal and tolerant temper of the Canadian people, and his conviction that neither in Manitoba nor elsewhere could any element of the community be subjected to enduring injustice. But he could be neither persuaded nor coerced into acceptance of the policy of the Remedial Order, nor yet into any definite denial of Catholic grievances under the Manitoba statutes. He simply contended throughout that coercion was unwise and dangerous, that there should be investigation of the practical operation of the laws and the educational conditions of the province, and that only through conciliation and compromise could harmony be restored and a satisfactory settlement effected. He was denounced by the more extreme opponents of federal intervention with hardly less violence than were the federal Ministers, and was alternately cajoled and menaced by the agencies which sought to drive him into acceptance of the policy of coercion. He said on one occasion that he was within the lines of Torres Vedras; and the light, apt, and *insouciant* comparison of his situation with that of Wellington in the Peninsular

¹ Archbishop Taché, petitioning the federal Government for disallowance of the School Acts, said: "The two statutes, 53 Victoria, chapter 37 and 38, were passed in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to merge the Catholic schools with those of the Protestant denominations, and to require all members of the community, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, to contribute through taxation to the support of what are therein called Public Schools, but which are in reality a continuation of the Protestant schools."

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campaign, recalled the bantering humour of the worn, old sleeper in Cataraqui, and broke the force of a thousand shafts from open foes, uneasy friends, and impatient advisers.¹ Like Lincoln, with his proclamation of freedom for the bondmen of the South, restrained by timid counsellors upon the one hand and harassed by eager abolitionists upon the other, he waited with infinite patience for the decisive moment, and when he struck, the blow was effective for his party and for his country. This thing they call irresolution is often the very pith and marrow of statesmanship.

In the meantime evidence accumulated that behind the bold front of the Remedial Order, doubt, hesitation, and dissension confused the counsels and paralyzed the action of the Bowell Cabinet. In March, 1895, it was announced that Sir Hibbert Tupper had resigned from the Government, but

¹ "I am accused by the Conservative press of having expressed no opinion upon this question. I have expressed an opinion more than once upon it, but I have not yet expressed the opinion which the ministerial press would like me to express. I am not responsible for that question, but I do not want to shirk it; I want to give you my views, but remember that war has to be waged in a certain way. When the Duke of Wellington was in Portugal, as those of you will remember who have read that part of the history of England, he withdrew at one time within the lines of Torres Vedras, and there for months he remained, watching the movements of the enemy. The French at that time were commanded by Marshal Massena, and Massena said: 'I want that man to come down from his lines; let him come down into the plain and I will thrash him, but I cannot assail him within the lines.' Gentlemen, I am within the lines of Torres Vedras. I will get out of them when it suits me, and not before."—Mr. Laurier at Morrisburg, October 8th, 1895.

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the ground of his difference with his colleagues was never quite understood, and he soon resumed the administration of his department. It is believed that he sought to have Parliament dissolved and a general election held in advance of actual legislation under the Remedial Order. In Haldimand a bye-election became necessary in consequence of Dr. Montague's admission to the Cabinet, and a McCarthy candidate set up to oppose the new Minister was vigorously supported by Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Sifton, Attorney-General for Manitoba, who presented the case for his province in a series of singularly lucid and powerful addresses. The Minister was re-elected with a majority of 594, but the contest accentuated the divisions in the Conservative party, while the arguments advanced against the policy of coercion took firm hold on the country. Subsequent bye-elections in Ontario and Quebec returned opponents of the Government. In Ontario, however, the forces led by Mr. McCarthy seemed to be the dominant factor, while the results of contests in several constituencies revealed the Liberal party in a condition of almost mortal weakness.¹

¹ In Antigonish, N.S. (April 17th, 1895), which became vacant through the death of Sir John Thompson, McIsaac, Liberal, was elected by a majority of 118, as against a Conservative majority of 222 in 1891. In North Ontario (December 12th, 1895) the vote was: McGillivray, Conservative, 2,085; Brandon, Patron, 1,289; Gillespie, Liberal, 1,096. In Cardwell (December 24th) the vote was: Stubbs, McCarthyite, 1,503; Willoughby, Conservative, 1,296; Henry, Liberal, 544. In Montreal Centre (December 27th) McShane, Liberal, had a majority

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On December 12th, 1895, Mr. Clarke Wallace, Minister of Customs, and Grand Master of the Orange Association, withdrew from the Cabinet. Sir Charles Tupper, one of the great figures of the Conservative party for nearly half a century, was recalled from London, where, since 1883, with brief intervals of service in the House of Commons, he had occupied the post of High Commissioner for Canada. This was taken as conclusive evidence either of an impending general election, or of his appointment to the leadership in succession to Sir Mackenzie Bowell. Then on the very eve of the meeting of Parliament to give effect to the pledge of the united Cabinet "to introduce and press to a conclusion such legislation as would afford an adequate measure of relief to the minority based upon the lines of the judgment of the Privy Council and the Remedial Order," came the astounding announcement that seven of the Ministers had thrown up their portfolios, and that the Cabinet of Sir Mackenzie Bowell had utterly gone to pieces. This, whatever the operating causes, is the most sensational and humiliating incident in Canadian parliamentary history. There were probably influences at work which the country has never understood, and

over Hingston, Conservative, of 336, where in the previous election the Conservative majority was 1,214. In Jacques Cartier (December 30th) a Conservative majority of 276 in 1891 was turned into a Liberal majority of 574. In West Huron (January 14th, 1896), made vacant by the appointment of the Hon. J. C. Patterson to the Lieut.-Governorship of Manitoba, Cameron, Liberal, was elected with a majority of 180.

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it may be that the men who mutinied had great provocation. But it is still impossible to judge the event except upon its face, and in the light of the explanations made in Parliament, and even of all the evidence in mitigation that has yet appeared, censure lies upon the Ministers concerned and discredit attaches to the transaction.

Parliament was told in effect that Sir Mackenzie Bowell's colleagues did not think he was equal to the responsibilities of the premiership and the leadership of the Conservative party, and that it was necessary in the party interest and in the public interest that a stronger leader should be substituted. There was probably pretty general agreement among Conservatives, as among Liberals, that Sir Mackenzie Bowell lacked some of the essential qualifications for leadership, and when it is remembered that in the background stood the great figures of Sir John Macdonald and Sir John Thompson, or even that Sir Charles Tupper with all his dash, resource, and rugged virility was still available for the command, it is not surprising that there was dissatisfaction and uneasiness among Conservatives in the Cabinet and in the country. But there were few Conservatives indeed who had any word of approval for the heroic method adopted to remove Sir Mackenzie Bowell, and the Premier's observation that for months he had lived in a nest of traitors epitomized the public estimate of the whole unfortunate proceeding.

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Sir Mackenzie Bowell made a determined attempt to reorganize his Cabinet, to the exclusion of Mr. Foster, Sir Hibbert Tupper, Mr. Haggart, Mr. Ives, Mr. Wood and Dr. Montague. But the striking Ministers instituted a system of pickets, very like the system adopted by unionists in a labour strike, and most of the stronger men who could have taken their places were persuaded to reject the Premier's overtures. The efforts which Sir Mackenzie Bowell had made when he formed his Government to induce Sir William Meredith to descend from the bench and take political office at Ottawa, were renewed but were again unsuccessful, and no better fortune was had with such men as Dr. Weldon of Halifax, and Sir George Kirkpatrick, then Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, and throughout all his political life an admirable public servant. At last a compromise was effected under which Sir Mackenzie Bowell was to retain the premiership until the close of the session, when Sir Charles Tupper was to succeed, reorganize the Administration, and go to the country. It is just to say that under all these trying and humiliating experiences Sir Mackenzie Bowell bore himself with serenity and with dignity; and while history will say that he was an extreme partisan and will refuse to rank him among the greater statesmen of the Canadian Confederation, it will not deny that he kept clean hands and a good heart throughout a very long term of public service, and that his

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fidelity to his convictions and loyalty to his party were proof even against the extraordinary treatment which he received at the hands of his own political household.¹

¹ "Though with many misgivings we agreed to enter the Government under Mr. Bowell in succession to Sir John Thompson, we have nevertheless unitedly and loyally striven to the best of our ability to make it strong and efficient, and it has been with growing regret that we have seen our efforts result in a measure of success less than that for which we had hoped and striven. We are of the opinion that the Liberal Conservative party ought to be represented by the strongest Government possible to be secured from its ranks, that the necessity therefor was never greater than under existing circumstances, and we believe that such a Government can be formed without delay. This we have repeatedly urged upon the Premier, with the result that we found ourselves face to face with Parliament having a Government with its numbers incomplete, and with no assurance that the present Premier could satisfactorily complete it. Under these circumstances we thought it our duty to retire, and in this manner to pave the way, if possible, for the formation of a Government whose Premier could command the confidence of all his colleagues, could satisfy the Liberal Conservative party that its strongest elements were at its head, and impress the country that it had a Government which was united and had power to govern. We affirm with the utmost sincerity that the action we have taken has sprung from no feeling of personal dislike or of personal ambition, but has been solely dictated by our wish to sink all minor considerations in the presence of our great desire that the best interests of our party and country should be duly conserved."—Hon. Geo. E. Foster, *Hansard*, January 7th, 1896, page 10.

"I might naturally, I think, ask if these reasons were the sincere convictions of the gentleman who wrote them, or of the others who acquiesced in the sentiments. If so, how is it that the discovery was not made until we were in the beginning of a session, until it was impossible almost to proceed with the business of the country without having not only a disintegration of the Government itself, but treating the people of the country with, I was going to say, comparative contempt? Surely my colleagues knew my incapacity to govern before

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The sitting member for Cape Breton resigned in order to provide a constituency for Sir Charles Tupper. A stormy campaign followed. During its progress the Catholic Bishop of Antigonish savagely denounced the opponents of the Administration's Manitoba school policy, and this and other similar utterances plainly revealed an organized clerical movement to enforce the ratification of the Remedial Order. But the blow which was delivered against Sir Mackenzie Bowell was the death-blow of the Administration. Public confidence could not

the meeting of Parliament and long before they sent in their resignations. Surely they could not have come to the opinion in so short a period that I was unfit to continue at the head of this Government. What occurred between the writing of that speech, (from the Throne), the placing of it in His Excellency's hands, the meeting of Parliament, and the delivery of that speech by His Excellency? What, I ask, could possibly have occurred, or what have you been told occurred, during those two or three days to lead them to the conclusion which impelled them to take so important a step as they have done? Had they come to me previous to the meeting of Parliament, had they met me in Council and said, 'We disagree with the policy which you have laid down;' had they said that there was, in any single particular, a difference of opinion upon the great issues that were agitating the people of the country, and they could not, by any possibility, be a party to it; or had they gone further and said, 'After one year and a quarter's experience of you as head of the Government, we have lost confidence in your ability to continue to direct the affairs of the country,' then I could have understood it. Then I could have said, 'Take the reins of Government, I will not stand in the way.' And I never shall stand in the way of the future success of that great party to which I have had the honour of belonging from boyhood up, and towards which I have done something for its prosperity and continuance in governing."—Sir Mackenzie Bowell, Senate Debates. January 9th, 1896, pages 3, 4.

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be restored. The evidences of intrigue and dissension at Ottawa necessarily affected the spirit and unity of the party throughout the country. For, as Kipling says:

This is the law of the jungle, as old and as true as the sky;
And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the wolf
that shall break it must die;
As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk, the law runneth
forward and back,
For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength
of the wolf is the pack.

Just before Parliament met, the Manitoba Ministers sent down an answer to the Order-in-Council which the Dominion Government had adopted in July, and which contained the menace of federal legislation if the provincial Ministers failed to act according to the directions of the Remedial Order. The provincial authorities affirmed that the Privy Council did not declare how the powers of the Government or of Parliament ought to be exercised, nor did the court possess any authority to make such a declaration. The function of the court was to declare the constitutional powers of the Government and Parliament, and not their policy. The action to be taken in the exercise of such powers was purely a matter of statesmanship to be decided in the last resort by the people of Canada, and not by a court of law. The question of relief to the minority, therefore, came before the Governor-General-in-Council, and would now come before Parliament as a question of policy to be decided

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upon its educational merits, subject always to the well recognized principle that the central authority ought not to interfere with a province, except in a case of the most urgent necessity. The Governor-General-in-Council was in no way bound by the Constitution to make a Remedial Order, granting the prayer of the appellants in whole or in part; nor was Parliament now bound by the Constitution to make a Remedial Order granting the prayer of the appellants in whole or in part; nor was Parliament now bound by the Constitution, expressly or by implication, to give effect to the Remedial Order in whole or in part. The remedy sought to be applied was fraught with great danger to the principle of provincial autonomy. An independent consideration of the subject, as well as the recognized constitutional practice in analogous cases, clearly indicated that it should only be made use of as a last resort, and after the clearest possible case had been made out. It was obvious that so drastic a proceeding as the coercion of a province, in order to impose upon it a policy repugnant to the declared wish of its people, could be justified only by clear and unmistakable proof of flagrant wrong-doing on the part of the provincial authorities.

The provincial Ministers argued that the question of whether or not there should be restoration of the privileges of which the minority in Manitoba had been deprived was one of public policy. They

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regretted that the invitation extended by the Legislative Assembly to make a proper inquiry into the facts of the case had not been accepted, and that the federal Government had declared its policy without investigation. They declared that any proposal to establish a system of Separate Schools in any form would be rejected by Manitoba, and that the principle of a uniform, non-sectarian Public School system would be resolutely maintained. Referring to reported utterances that remedial legislation did not necessarily mean that the Remedial Order should be literally followed, or that the system of Separate Schools which existed prior to 1890 should be restored, they suggested that if remedial legislation in any other form than literal confirmation of the Remedial Order should be introduced, grave doubt would arise as to the competency of Parliament to pass such legislation, except it were first submitted to the Legislature of the province. If other legislation were contemplated, it might become necessary to amend the Remedial Order, and it was doubtful if any power existed to amend or rescind that Order. They again earnestly invited the federal authorities to undertake an inquiry sufficiently wide to embrace all available facts relating to the past or existing school system, and they said in conclusion: "In amending the law from time to time, and in administering the system, it is the earnest desire to remedy every well-founded grievance, and to

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remove every appearance of inequality or injustice that may be brought to notice. With a view to so doing, the Government and Legislature will always be ready to consider any complaint that may be made in a spirit of fairness and conciliation. It seems, therefore, most reasonable to conclude that by leaving the question to be so dealt with, the truest interests of the minority will be better served than by an attempt to establish a system of Separate Schools by coercive legislation. Such a system, discredited as it is, will be from the outset crippled by reason of insufficient pecuniary support and ineffective educational equipment, and will be an injury rather than a benefit to those whom it is intended to serve."

In January, the Manitoba Legislature was dissolved in order to obtain a reaffirmation of the popular judgment in support of the national school system. Thirty-three out of the forty constituencies pronounced in favour of the school policy of the provincial Administration. Conferences between Sir Donald Smith, Mr. Dickey, Minister of Militia, and Senator Desjardins, with provincial Ministers at Winnipeg, resulted in nothing. The federal Administration could not abandon the policy of the Remedial Order. The provincial Government, in the heated condition of public feeling, could not accept any settlement short of absolute recognition of the Public School system.

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The federal commissioners proposed that a measure should be passed by the Legislature then sitting, to provide that in towns and villages where there were resident, say, twenty-five Roman Catholic children of school age, and in cities where there were fifty of such children, the Board of Trustees should arrange that such children should have a school-house or school-room for their own use, where they might be taught by a Roman Catholic teacher; and Roman Catholic parents or guardians, say, ten in number, might appeal to the Department of Education from any decision or neglect of the Board in respect of its duty, and the Board should observe and carry out all decisions and directions of the Department on any such appeal. Provision should be made that schools wherein the majority of children were Catholics should be exempted from the requirements of the regulations as to religious exercises. Text-books should be permitted in Catholic schools such as would not offend the religious views of the minority, and which from an educational standpoint should be satisfactory to the Advisory Board. Catholics should have representation on the Advisory Board and on the Board of Examiners appointed to examine teachers for certificates. It was also proposed that Catholics should have assistance in the maintenance of a Normal School for the education of their teachers, and that the existing system of permits to non-qualified teachers in Catholic schools should be continued for two years,

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to enable them to qualify, and then to be entirely discontinued. In all other respects the schools which Catholics attended were to be Public Schools, and subject to every provision of the education acts for the time being in force in Manitoba. In case a written agreement should be reached, and the necessary legislation passed, the Remedial Bill then before Parliament was to be withdrawn, and any rights and privileges which might be claimed by the minority in view of the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council should, during the due observance of such agreement, remain in abeyance and be not further insisted upon.

In reply the Manitoba Ministers pointed out that they had stipulated that during the conference the Remedial Bill should be held in abeyance, and that in the event of an agreement being reached the bill should be at once withdrawn. These stipulations were agreed to by the Dominion commissioners. But despite this understanding the bill had just been advanced a stage in the House of Commons, and the agreement made in behalf of the federal Government thus violated. They then proceeded to say that an amendment to the School Act embodying the terms of the memorandum submitted by the Dominion commissioners would divide the population for educational purposes into two classes, Roman Catholic and Protestant, giving to the Roman Catholic population distinct and special privileges as against the remaining portion

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of the people. It would establish a system of State-supported Separate Schools for the Roman Catholic people, and would compel their support by the school taxes and legislative grants. Not only so, but the whole school organization—text-book regulations, constitution of Advisory Board, Boards of Examiners, and Normal School—would be modified to bring it into accord with the separation principle to an extent not usual even in places where regularly constituted Separate School systems obtain.

Separate Schools under the first clause of the memorandum submitted would result in a teacher having under his charge a comparatively small number of pupils of various ages and degrees of proficiency. The school could not therefore be properly graded, and could not attain the degree of efficiency reached by Public Schools in cities, towns, and villages. Grading of classes and mutual competition would be destroyed, and the Separate School would therefore of necessity be inferior. The organization of the Separate School would be compulsory, and Roman Catholics would be deprived by law of the right to send their children to the Public Schools. There seemed to be no precedent, even in Separate School legislation, for such a provision. In many cases it would be impossible to provide a separate building, and the Roman Catholic children would therefore be assigned a room in the Public School. It seemed beyond dispute that nothing could be worse than the separation of children into

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two distinct bodies within daily view of each other. A voluntary Separate School system such as exists in Ontario, or such as Manitoba had prior to 1890, could be put into operation only where the Roman Catholic rates added to the legislative grant would be sufficient to maintain the school, but under the plan proposed this idea was not recognized. The school must be provided and maintained by the Public School trustees, and the contributions of the Roman Catholic ratepayers would only be a fraction of the cost of its maintenance. The bulk of the expense would, in fact, require to be met out of the taxes paid by non-Catholic ratepayers. It would be hard to conceive of a more indefensible and offensive method of compelling one portion of the people to pay for the education and sectarian religious training of the remainder.

The effect of clause two would be absolutely to divest the Legislature and Government of control over the schools so far as religious exercises and teaching were concerned. What would become of non-Catholic children while the religious education of the majority was proceeding? It would be impracticable to provide by statute that the text-books should be satisfactory to the Roman Catholic minority, but the provincial Ministers had no doubt that if other points could be agreed upon an arrangement as to text-books could be reached which would be mutually satisfactory. This part of the difficulty was, in fact, comparatively easy of adjust-

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ment. They had no objection to the Catholic people being represented upon the Advisory Board and the Board of Examiners. In fact, Archbishop Taché was offered a seat on the Advisory Board. They could not, however, see any practicable way of embodying such provision in the statutes. It would also be impossible to give a statutory privilege of representation to one religious denomination without according the same privilege to others. The proposal to assist a Separate Normal School could not be considered. The Normal School was a technical training school for teachers, and there could be no argument advanced in favour of dividing the funds, or of separating Roman Catholic teachers in process of training from others.

The objections to the proposals of the federal commissioners were, in brief, as follows: First, the statutory division of the people into separate denominational classes; second, the necessary inferiority of the Separate Schools; third, impairment of the efficiency of the Public Schools through division of school revenues; fourth, the burdening of non-Catholic ratepayers by compelling them to maintain Separate Schools; fifth, the according of special privileges to one denomination which could not on principle be denied to all the others, but which in practice could not be granted to such others without entire destruction of the school system.

The provincial Ministers added that they were prepared to secularize completely the Public School

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system, not as embodying the policy which the Government and Legislature of the province were themselves desirous of pursuing, but in order to attain a settlement of the dispute; or they would provide for religious exercises or teaching between half past three and four o'clock in the afternoon. Such teaching could be conducted by any Christian clergyman whose charge included any portion of the school district, or by any person satisfactory to a majority of the trustees who might be authorized by the clergyman to act in his stead. It could be provided that the trustees should allot the period fixed for religious exercises or teaching for the different days of the week to the representatives of the different religious denominations to which the pupils might belong, in such a way as to proportion the time allotted as nearly as possible to the number of pupils of the respective denominations in the school. Two or more denominations might have the privilege of uniting for the purpose of such religious exercises. No pupil should be permitted to be present at such exercises or teaching if the parents should object. Where the school-room accommodation at the disposal of the trustees permitted, instead of allotting different days of the week to different denominations, the trustees might direct that the pupils should be separated and placed in different rooms for the purpose of religious exercises as might be convenient.

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The rejoinder of the Dominion commissioners pointed out that they had intended to agree that the Remedial Bill should be withdrawn only when the school question was settled, and not when the agreement for the conference was reached. They contended that sufficient weight was not given by the provincial Ministers to the undoubted legal position of the Roman Catholics. They certainly had important legal rights to Separate Schools, and the discussion of the advantages of such schools was therefore not relevant to the situation, and so likely to raise misleading issues. The Roman Catholic population contributed their share of all taxation for schools, and were entitled to obtain education for their children. It was now a question of the mode of that education in view of the rights held by the minority under the Constitution. The commissioners would not insist upon Normal Schools, and as to text-books and representation on the Boards, as a matter of practice and administration they found that the provincial Ministers raised in point of fact no objection. They did not ask that the Roman Catholics should have a separate right to elect trustees or otherwise have any special representation on the Board of Trustees. The proposed schools would be controlled by trustees elected by the whole body of ratepayers. The standard of efficiency maintained would naturally be higher than could be reached by Roman Catholics who refused on conscientious grounds to attend

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the Public Schools, and were, therefore, obliged to maintain schools from their own private means without the aid of the legislative grant. Such schools would be more efficient, and the state of affairs under the system suggested would be much better for the community than that which would obtain under existing conditions, or under the Remedial Bill if it became law. They said they could not accept the reasoning of the provincial Ministers with respect to financial objections. What was proposed was that there should be in towns and villages twenty-five, and in cities fifty Roman Catholic children before they could ask for a separate room or building, while under the old law before 1890, under the Remedial Bill, and even under the existing provincial law, the presence of ten children only was necessary to the establishment of a school district. The argument that provision should be made for non-Catholic children was well taken and in accordance with the views of the Dominion commissioners, which were in this respect imperfectly expressed in the memorandum. They said in conclusion: "We once more appeal to you in the interests of the whole population of the province, indeed of the Dominion, as well as in the interests of the minority, to reconsider the decision at which you have arrived, and to make some proposal that we could regard as affording a chance of the settlement which we so earnestly desire."

In a final word from the provincial Ministers

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it was said that in so far as the re-establishment of Separate Schools was concerned the question had for years been considered settled by the Legislature and people of the province. They had hitherto believed that a State-aided Separate School system and only that would be accepted by the minority. This view had been repeatedly stated, and they had not yet been authoritatively informed to the contrary. Their contention in this respect was shown to be correct by the proposition of the Dominion commissioners, which indubitably meant a system of schools separating by law Protestants from Roman Catholics, and wholly dependent for support upon municipal taxation and the legislative grant. It was further pointed out that any settlement between the Government of the Dominion and that of Manitoba must, by the very terms of the instructions to the federal commissioners, be subjected to the sanction of the representatives of the minority. The province was absolutely debarred from conceding a system of Roman Catholic and State-aided Separate Schools, while the representatives of the minority, and as a consequence, the federal Government would accept nothing less. Notwithstanding the failure of negotiations, the Government of the province would always be prepared to receive and discuss any suggestions which might be made with a view to removing any inequalities which could be shown to exist in the present law.

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Parliament met on January 2nd, 1896, but the session was well advanced before the Remedial Bill was introduced. It contained 112 clauses, and, while not in exact conformity with the Remedial Order, embodied a distinct recognition of the principle of Separate Schools, and provided machinery and regulations for the organization and maintenance of the schools to be established thereunder. It was, in fact, a full satisfaction of the demands of the Catholic bishops, and naturally the ecclesiastics united in a determined effort to force its passage through Parliament. It becomes necessary, therefore, to consider their attitude, and to review the most desperate attempt at clerical coercion which even Canada has ever witnessed. Their position involved a clear assumption of supremacy within the realm of the State, and we had in Quebec a manifestation of the ancient spirit of Ultramontanism as fierce in its anathema of Liberal candidates and as destructive of public tranquility as that which put down Liberal principles and Liberal teachings with such merciless vigour during the sixties and seventies.

The bishops first issued a collective *mandement* inviting the electors to support only such candidates as would pledge themselves to restore Separate Schools to the Catholics of Manitoba. The document, though necessarily favourable to Conservative candidates under the circumstances, made no direct discrimination as between the two great political parties, and it remained open for such Liberals

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as would accept its instructions to evade positive condemnation. A more vigorous campaign was opened by Mgr. Langevin, who had succeeded Archbishop Taché in the diocese of St. Boniface, and was, therefore, the natural spokesman of the Catholics of Manitoba. During the first weeks of 1896 he delivered inflammatory addresses throughout the parishes of Laprairie and Napierville in Quebec, and in the course of an address at Montreal said: "All those who do not follow the hierarchy are not Catholics. When the hierarchy has spoken it is useless for a Catholic to say the contrary, for if he acts that way he ceases to be a Catholic. Such a man can bear the title, but in my capacity as bishop I say this evening, and I say it with full authority, that a Catholic who does not follow the hierarchy on the school question is not a Catholic any longer. Who would give the title of Catholic to this man? What is the society or government which would give him the right to call himself Catholic, when, by my authority as a Catholic bishop, I declare that this man has no right to the title." The full policy of the Church was revealed in the letter which Father Lacombe, in the name of the bishops, presented to the Liberal leader. It was dated January 20th, 1896, and read as follows:

"In this critical time for the question of the Manitoba schools, permit an aged missionary, to-day representing the bishops of our country in this

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cause which concerns us all, to appeal to your faith, to your patriotism and to your spirit of justice, to entreat you to accede to our request. It is in the name of our bishops, of the hierarchy and of Canadian Catholics, that we ask your party, of which you are the so worthy chief, to assist us in settling this famous question, and to do so by voting with the Government on the Remedial Bill. We do not ask you to vote for the Government, but for the bill which will render us our rights, which bill will be presented to the House in a few days. I consider, or rather, we all consider, that such an act of courage, good-will, and sincerity on your part and from those who follow your policy will be greatly in the interests of your party, especially in the general elections. I must tell you that we cannot accept your commission of inquiry for any reason, and we will do the best to fight it. If, which may God not grant, you do not believe it to be your duty to accede to our just demands, and that the Government which is anxious to give us the promised law, be beaten and over thrown, while keeping firm to the end of the struggle, I inform you with regret that the episcopacy, like one man, united to the clergy, will rise to support those who may have fallen to defend us. Please pardon my frankness which leads me to speak thus. Though I am not your intimate friend, still I may say that we have been on good terms. Always I have deemed you a gentleman, a respectable citizen,

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and a man well able to be at the head of a political party. May Divine Providence keep up your courage and your energy for the good of our common country."

It became necessary for the Liberal leader to deal with this ultimatum, and to declare in unmistakable terms his repudiation of its spirit and of its assumptions. He had settled clearly and definitely the course that he would take, and while he had gloomy forebodings as to the issue for himself and his party, he could not now sacrifice the professions and the convictions of a lifetime at the dictation of the heads of the Church to which he belonged, and whose pretensions to supremacy in the civil sphere he had always opposed. It required rare courage to make the decision, and no man who knew the history of Canada as Mr. Laurier knew it could reasonably hope that political advantage would accrue from the position he was bound to take. He knew the power of the Catholic hierarchy, and greatly deplored the necessity for a quarrel which threatened immense political loss, and which he profoundly feared would lead many of his best friends to defeat in the constituencies. But the press had published Father Lacombe's letter broadcast, and he had no alternative but to make his reply in the face of the country. When the hour came for him to speak he took his ground without flinching, and with a simple and manly dignity which wholly became the issue and the circumstances.

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On March 3rd, the Remedial Bill came up for its second reading, and it became necessary for Mr. Laurier to declare the policy of the Opposition. He made a strong and consistent argument on the general question, and reviewed at length the various steps leading up to the situation of the moment. He said that under the judgment of the Privy Council, Parliament had power to interfere, to pass the Remedial Order, and enforce it by legislation. It was, however, the first duty of the Government to investigate the complaints of the minority. But instead of making investigation they passed a drastic order-in-council, which they served upon Manitoba, and now, without inquiry and without information, they asked Parliament in the name of the minority to enact legislation to give effect to the Remedial Order. He declared in the name of the minority that the course of the Government was unconstitutional, weak, and dangerous. He disputed the contention that the Government were bound to act mechanically, and that upon the complaint of the minority, unsupported by evidence, the law of the majority should be set aside. Even if a wrong had been done it could not be righted by a bill passed in darkness and in ignorance, and which must be administered by a hostile Government. Only methods of conciliation and of persuasion could be effective, and only by a settlement so obtained could the question be solved and the minority benefited. He could not forget, he said, that the

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policy which he had advocated and maintained all along had not been favourably received in all quarters, and he continued :

“Not many weeks ago I was told from high quarters in the Church to which I belong, that unless I supported the school bill which was then being prepared by the Government, and which we have now before us, I would incur the hostility of a great and powerful body. Sir, this is too grave a phase of this question for me to pass it by in silence. I have only this to say, even though I have threats held over me, coming, as I am told, from high dignitaries in the Church to which I belong, no word of bitterness shall ever pass my lips as against that Church. I respect it and I love it ; but sir, I am not of that school which has been long dominant in France and other countries of continental Europe, which refuses ecclesiastics the privilege of having a voice in public affairs. No, I am a Liberal of the English school. I believe in that school which has all along claimed that it is the privilege of all subjects, whether high or low. whether rich or poor, whether ecclesiastic or layman, to participate in the administration of public affairs, to discuss, to influence, to persuade, to convince, but which has always denied, even to the highest, the right to dictate even to the lowest. I am here representing not Roman Catholics alone, but Protestants as well, and I must give an account of my stewardship to all classes. Here am I, a Roman

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Catholic of French extraction, entrusted with the confidence of the men who sit around me, with great and important duties under our constitutional system of Government. I am here, the acknowledged leader of a great party composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants as well, in which Protestants must be in the majority, as in every party. Am I to be told—I, occupying such a position—that I am to be dictated to as to the course I am to take in this House by reasons that can appeal to the consciences of my fellow-Catholic members, but which do not appeal as well to the consciences of my Protestant colleagues? No ! So long as I have a seat in this House, so long as I occupy the position I do now, whenever it shall become my duty to take a stand upon any question whatever, that stand I will take, not from the point of view of Roman Catholicism, not from the point of view of Protestantism, but from a point of view which can appeal to the consciences of all men, irrespective of their particular faith, upon grounds which can be occupied by all men who love justice, freedom, and toleration."

He added that while he must acknowledge that there rested in the Government and in Parliament the power to interfere, he must still contend that that power should not be exercised until all the facts bearing upon the case had been investigated, and all means of conciliation exhausted, and he therefore moved that the bill be not then read a

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second time, but that it be read a second time that day six months.¹ This was a bold position, bolder perhaps than the country had thought he could take, and it was as satisfactory to the great body of Liberals, as it was unwelcome to the Catholic bishops and the political champions of the dangerous policy of federal coercion.

The bishops were undoubtedly pledged to support the Remedial measure, and therefore bound to exert their episcopal influence in behalf of the Government. But some of the ecclesiastics, and particularly Archbishop Walsh of Ontario, like Archbishop Lynch in earlier times, maintained a discreet and moderate attitude, and exercised only the legitimate rights of citizenship in sympathetic effort to improve the position of the Catholic people of Manitoba. One of the most extraordinary utterances of the contest was that of Bishop Laflèche of Three Rivers. In the course of a sermon denouncing Mr. Laurier and the Liberals, he told the people that to vote for Liberal candidates would be a grievous sin. He quoted Mr. Laurier's declaration that he would take his stand upon public questions, "not from the point of view of Roman Catholicism, nor from the point of view of Protestantism, but from a point of view which would appeal to the consciences of all men, irrespective of their political faith, and upon grounds which could be occupied by all men who loved

¹ Hansard, March 3rd, 1896, pages 2,758, 2,759.

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justice, freedom, and toleration," and he said: "There is the most categorical affirmation of the Liberalism condemned by the Church which has ever been made, to my knowledge, in a Legislative Assembly of our country. The man who speaks thus is a rationalist Liberal. He formulates a doctrine entirely opposed to the Catholic doctrine; that is to say, that a Catholic is not bound to be a Catholic in his public life. It is a fundamental error, which can lead to the most deplorable consequences."

The bishop quoted a Liberal member from Quebec who had said that while Mgr. Langevin had a perfect right to be satisfied with the Remedial Bill in its religious aspect, he as a French-Canadian had the right to his own opinion when it came to a discussion of the national and constitutional side of the question.¹ "There," said Bishop Laflèche, "is the Church set aside in a matter where the very rights of conscience are at stake. Here is a member who rises in face of the bishops and says to them squarely: 'You say that the bill is acceptable, but I say no.' Whom are we to believe? Who has jurisdiction to speak with authority? The Church, that is to say, the hierarchy. The member says it is he. Well, that is Liberalism, pure and simple; that Liberalism which, under pretext that a religious question touches politics on certain sides, forbids religious authority to interfere." He said further

¹ See speech of Mr. Monet, M.P. for Napierville, Hansard, March 12th, 1896, page 3,348.

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that, "Under the circumstances, a Catholic cannot, under pain of sinning in a grave matter, vote for the chief of a party who has formulated so publicly such an error, and for his followers who support him in that error, so long as they will not have publicly disavowed that error and made a formal engagement to vote for a Remedial Bill accepted by the bishops." He counselled the people to lay aside all party feeling, and to judge men and events from the point of view of Catholic principles only and Catholic teaching only. "This," he concluded, "you will do courageously as Catholics, as Canadians and as citizens, and the good God will bless your efforts and will permit you to find here below a taste of the happiness which He reserves to His elect."

Many of the parish priests took advantage of such episcopal utterances to join in the contest, and throughout Quebec, as well as in some of the constituencies of the English-speaking provinces, it was held to be a grievous sin to vote for Liberal candidates. Mgr. Marois, Vicar-General, wrote from the Archbishopric of Quebec to the Rev. J. E. Rouleau, curé of St. Ubalde: "In reply to your letter asking if it is a mortal sin for anyone not to follow the direction given by their bishops in their collective *mandement* touching the settlement of the Manitoba question when his attention will have been drawn to the fact that this direction obliges in conscience, I am charged by Mgr. the Administrator, to tell you that it is a grave fault—

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a mortal sin—not to follow the direction of the first pastors, and that the words which you quote from page 7 of the *mandement* signify exactly that it will be a grave and mortal fault to act thus, that is to say, not to obey the bishops. If anyone says to you, ‘In spite of your reasoning I have more confidence in Mr. Laurier and I vote for his candidate,’ that elector, unless he has lost common sense, will be guilty of grave and mortal fault. Good Catholics, faithful sons of the Church, will march in the way indicated by their bishops. Others would be rebellious sons and following the way of iniquity and of grave sin, which separates from God and delivers us to the powers of darkness.”

A letter over the signature of Father Macdonald, parish priest of Alexandria, circulated in at least one of the counties of Ontario, said in part: “As some designing politicians have misrepresented the attitude of the Catholic clergy in the present election campaign, I am authorized by his Lordship Bishop Macdonell to say to you and all interested parties that he earnestly desires that all Catholics will vote for the Government candidate. He expects that his Catholic subjects, for the maintenance of the essentially Catholic principle of Separate Schools, will be Catholic and generous enough to rise superior to all party ties or political combinations in the present crisis ;” and again, “He further authorized me to say that all the archbishops and bishops of Canada are united on this question,

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and they all, without a single exception, desire their faithful to support Government candidates, because events have convinced the bishops that a redress of Catholic grievances in Manitoba can be expected from the present Government, and from it only."

It would be easy to multiply such literature. But these extraordinary deliverances sufficiently indicate the temper of the Catholic ecclesiastics and the desperate nature of the influences which many Liberal candidates had to encounter. On the other hand, an intense Protestant feeling was excited in many communities, the dying Protestant Protective Association with which Liberals could have no natural alliance, was revived, and the Orange Association, which in Canada at least is rarely dominated by mere sectarian bigotry, was exceedingly uneasy in its familiar political alliances. At a great political meeting in Toronto, influential leaders of the Conservative party united with men of conspicuous position in the Liberal party in determined resistance of the movement to interfere with the school legislation of Manitoba.¹ The Equal Rights League, of which Mr. D'Alton McCarthy was president, issued an address in which they said: "It seemed incredible that the free electors of any constituency in Ontario would, if they understood the policy of the Government, sanction its dealing with the Manitoba school question. At first the

¹ Meeting at Massey Hall, February 23rd, 1896.

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party supporting it were inveigled into an unwilling approval of it by the artful pretence that the Administration were acting in a judicial capacity. But as in the later proceeding, the Government has had to throw off the mask and appear in its true character of coercionists who have bargained in a *concordat* made with the hierarchy of Quebec as the price of its support to restore the French half-breed system of Separate Schools in Manitoba, the defeat of that policy was assured if the Government were only boldly encountered." The manifesto goes on to say, "that it fell upon the little band who are connected with the League in the default made by the regular Opposition to seek for the honest verdict of the people of Canada on this question." It deals then with the contest in Haldimand where the ministerial candidate was successful, and with the bye-election in the Conservative constituency of Cardwell which was captured by a League candidate, and concludes from these events that at the approaching general election the people will put an end to, "that baneful ecclesiastical influence which has been the curse of Canada, and has done so much to divide its people and to retard the growth and proper development of our country, and to which both the old political parties have in times past succumbed." Another paragraph says, "It cannot be denied that the French-Canadian hierarchy seem to be straining their dictatorship to the breaking limit, and it is hoped that in the all-

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important contest which is impending, the struggle will not be altogether sectarian nor conducted upon national or racial lines." The League finally declare that their motto is, "Hands off Manitoba—No coercion," and that "except where provided for in the British North America Act, there should be but one official language throughout Canada, and that the uncontrolled jurisdiction in the matter of education in the North-West and in the provinces to be created out of it should be left to the people of the Territories and of those provinces."

The Remedial Bill, in the meantime had failed of adoption in the House of Commons. The normal majority of the Government was fifty-three, but a majority of only eighteen was recorded for the measure on its second reading, and this included the votes of six Catholic Liberals. When the bill got into committee, a deliberate and resolute course of obstruction was entered upon by its opponents, and the circumstances were peculiarly favourable to the success of this policy. The Constitution fixes the duration of Parliament "for five years from the day of the return of the writs for choosing the House, and no longer," and under this provision Parliament would dissolve by effluxion of time on April 24th. The bill was introduced on February 11th, and the motion for the second reading made on March 3rd, and from that date until April 16th no other subject was discussed. The final sitting for

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the consideration of the measure lasted from three o'clock on Monday until two o'clock on Thursday morning, and Sir Charles Tupper was then forced to announce that as only a single week of the life of Parliament remained, it was absolutely necessary to vote money for the urgent requirements of the public service, and to deal with other important measures. The more aggressive leaders of the obstructionists were the Hon. N. Clarke Wallace and the Hon. Joseph Martin, and their work was performed with unceasing vigilance, untiring energy, and bold employment of all the expedients of parliamentary controversy. Sir Charles Tupper had assumed the leadership of the House of Commons upon his election for Cape Breton, and the lion-hearted veteran of four-score years took upon his shoulders the brunt of the stern parliamentary fighting for the policy which he had inherited from the plunging and distracted Cabinet of Sir Mackenzie Bowell. He fought with amazing freshness and with indomitable courage. But the sands of the life of Parliament ran out all too swiftly, and the Opposition had him at their mercy. He could only yield, though with a stormy and menacing front, and carry his appeal to the country.

Parliament was prorogued on April 23rd, and Sir Charles Tupper proceeded at once to reorganize the Cabinet. Changes were made in half a dozen portfolios, but the reorganized Ministry embraced no new men of commanding influence, except,

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perhaps, Mr. Angers, of Quebec, and Mr. Hugh John Macdonald, of Manitoba. Mr. Angers had an excellent reputation in Quebec, but his treatment of Mr. Mercier had raised against him bitter and powerful opponents, and he seems to have had small share of the art and craft of the practising politician. Mr. Macdonald was a son of the old Conservative leader, who had sat in Parliament for two or three sessions, and combined a distinct distaste for public life with all his father's genial and attractive personal qualities. Still one more effort was made to persuade Sir William Meredith to leave the bench and enter the federal Cabinet. But Sir Charles Tupper, with his very great powers of persuasion, was no more successful than Sir Mackenzie Bowell. It is hard, indeed, to see how Sir William Meredith, with his record in the politics of Ontario, could have accepted the remedial policy. It is not likely, however, that he even required to consider the situation from this standpoint. He had accepted a judicial office for which he had eminent qualifications, and seems to have been altogether disinclined to return to active politics. His political career was unsuccessful, as we count success, but there have been few more useful and honourable in our history, and it can hardly be questioned that if he had joined Sir Charles Tupper he would have sensibly improved the prospects of the Conservative party. Mr. B. B. Osler, Q.C., the leader of the jury bar in Ontario, was also invited

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to enter the Cabinet as Minister of Justice. Mr. Osler was a nominal Liberal in politics, but for eight or ten years had maintained no active identification with the Liberal party. He felt, however, that if he entered the Cabinet, the fact would be treated as a desertion from the Liberals in the very teeth of the election, and that he would be exposed to suspicions against which he could offer no adequate justification. There were features of the general policy of the Conservative party which had his sympathy and support, but to federal interference with Manitoba he was resolutely opposed, and not even the promise of a material modification of that policy in case of his acceptance of office overcame his objection to the summary adoption of new political alliances, and the necessary antagonism to the Liberal leaders which this involved.

On the other hand, it was announced that Sir Oliver Mowat, who had held the Premiership of Ontario for more than twenty years, would accept a seat in the Liberal Cabinet in case Mr. Laurier succeeded in the elections, and his great reputation for prudence, sagacity, and integrity, materially strengthened the Liberal canvass. Mr. Fielding, the Liberal Premier of Nova Scotia, and Mr. Blair, the leader of the coalition Government of New Brunswick, also came out to lead the Liberal forces in their respective provinces, and altogether the Liberal party showed absolute unity and absolute devotion to the federal leader. During the few years

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preceding the election, Mr. Laurier had visited every province of the Confederation, and had even devoted months to arduous campaigning in the far western communities. Everywhere a new national spirit was born into the Liberal party, and a genuine enthusiasm for the leader developed.

But it was a hard, stern, eventful, and even tumultuous contest. Sir Charles Tupper, with characteristic courage, opened his campaign at Winnipeg; and at the very seat of the Government which had enacted the school legislation, and in the very face of the people most concerned, maintained the expedience and justice of the remedial policy. He stumped the eastern provinces, and made a tremendous campaign in Ontario. His vigour and endurance were phenomenal. Now and then he had to face hostile meetings in Conservative strongholds, but his spirit never was daunted and his energy never abated. He touched the dormant party spirit of the old Macdonald legions, and measurably overcame even the divisive and destructive work of Mr. Clarke Wallace and Mr. D'Alton McCarthy. We could almost see the restoration of party unity proceed under his hand. It is the fortune of a leader who meets defeat to receive dispraise and ingratitude, and while it may be that with all his bold constructive genius, Sir Charles Tupper lacked the more persuasive qualities of leadership, this at least is true that no braver man ever led a party into battle, and no more gallant

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fight was ever made to save a field than his in 1896. Mr. Laurier had never possessed such exceptional physical stamina as belonged to Sir Charles Tupper, and the unusual length and arduous character of the campaign tested his endurance to the utmost. But for six weeks his voice was hardly still, and everywhere his sympathetic eloquence, his candour and directness, his moderation of statement and abstention from all mischievous appeal to passion and prejudice, impressed the soberer elements of the community, and baffled the efforts of his opponents to stampede the business interests and shift the contest to grounds which provided surer footing for the Administration. In Quebec as in Ontario he held to an undeviating course upon the school question, and faced the menaces of the ecclesiastics and the envenomed assaults of their political agents in the courteous and respectful but still unyielding spirit which he had manifested on the floor of Parliament. While he would not bow to clerical dictation, he refused to utter a word which could excite the prejudices of other religious communions against that to which he belonged, and feed the sectarian fires which were burning all too fiercely.

The result of the polling was a decisive, if not an overwhelming victory for the Liberal party. In Ontario the Liberals carried forty-four out of ninety-two seats, while four seats were carried by Conservative opponents of the remedial policy, and three by Patrons of Industry in general sympathy.

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with the Liberal leaders. Nova Scotia elected eleven Liberals and nine Conservatives; New Brunswick five Liberals, eight Conservatives, and one Independent; and in Prince Edward Island three out of the five seats were carried by Liberal candidates. Manitoba, in whose behalf the battle against coercion was waged, returned a Conservative majority, but still elected Mr. D'Alton McCarthy and two Liberal representatives. The Territories and British Columbia gave seven out of ten seats to the Liberal party, while in Quebec, out of a total representation of sixty-five, only seventeen Conservatives secured election. To the Liberals of Quebec, maligned, misrepresented, and misunderstood from the very birth of Confederation, faithful through long years of adversity to the essential principles of civil and religious liberty, we owe the deliverance of Manitoba from the policy of federal coercion and the pacific settlement of a quarrel which threatened the integrity of Confederation and menaced the self-governing rights of all the western communities.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SCHOOL SETTLEMENT

HARDLY was the new federal Government well seated in office before negotiations were opened with the authorities of Manitoba for such amendment and modification of the provincial school legislation as would remove established grievances, and reconcile the Catholic ratepayers of the province to the Public School system. The provincial Ministers met Mr. Laurier in a cordial and conciliatory spirit, and a basis of compromise was arranged without difficulty. They held unflinchingly to the ground that no system of State-aided Separate Schools could receive recognition, and Mr. Laurier freely conceded that this was a demand which he was not entitled to prefer, and which indeed was not sanctioned by the judgment of the Privy Council. The agreement as finally reached, and as embodied in the statutes of Manitoba, provides that when authorized by a resolution passed by a majority of the trustees of the district in which the school is situated, or upon a petition presented to the trustees by the parents or guardians of ten children attending a rural school, or of twenty-five children attending a city, town or village school, there shall be religious teaching.

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Such religious teaching shall take place between the hours of 3.30 and 4.00 o'clock in the afternoon, and shall be conducted by any Christian clergyman whose charge includes any portion of the school district, or by any person duly authorized by such clergyman, or by a teacher when so authorized. Where so specified by resolution or petition, religious teaching during the prescribed period shall take place only on certain specified days of the week, instead of on every teaching day. In schools in towns and cities where the average attendance of Roman Catholic children is forty or upwards, and in villages and rural districts where the average attendance of such children is twenty-five or upwards, the trustees shall, if required by the parents or guardians of such number of Roman Catholic children respectively, employ at least one duly certificated Roman Catholic teacher; and similarly in towns and cities where the average attendance of non-Roman Catholic children is forty or upwards, and in villages and rural districts where the attendance of such children is twenty-five or upwards, a non-Roman Catholic teacher shall be employed. Where the school-room accommodation does not permit of the pupils being placed in separate rooms for the purpose of religious teaching, provision is made by the regulations of the Department of Education whereby the time allotted for religious teaching is divided in such a way that the religious teaching of Roman Catholic children is carried on

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during the prescribed time on one half of the teaching days of each month, and of non-Roman Catholic children during an equal period. During the secular school work, no separation of children by religious denominations is allowed. Where the school accommodation permits, the pupils may be placed in separate rooms for religious teaching. Children whose parents do not desire their attendance upon religious exercises must remain in another room, or be dismissed before such exercises are begun. Where ten of the pupils in any school speak the French language, or any language other than English as their native language, the teaching must be conducted in French or such other language, and English upon the bi-lingual system.¹ These are substantially the propositions rejected by the federal commissioners who negotiated with the Manitoba Government while the Remedial Bill was before the House of Commons.

In the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the Manitoba Legislature on February 18th, 1897, the Lieutenant-Governor thus referred to the settlement: "Since the last session of this Legislature the question of whether the Public School system of this province should be superseded by federal legislation, and the system existing before the passing of the Act of 1890 be reimposed upon the province, has been settled by an harmonious conference between the federal Ministers and my advisers. The

¹ Manitoba Statutes, 60 Vic. Chap. 26.

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terms of the settlement have already been made public, and a bill to amend the school law in accordance therewith will immediately be laid before you. The law as amended will be administered by my Government in a spirit of conciliation, and with a desire to make the provisions effective in extending the benefits of our educational system to every class in the community."

The announcement of the terms of settlement was well received by the country. There was no serious attack from Conservative journals, while Mr. E. F. Clarke, Conservative member for West Toronto, who had condemned the remedial policy in his election canvass, and Mr. John Ross Robertson, who had carried East Toronto as an independent protectionist and a strenuous opponent of federal intervention in Manitoba, substantially accepted the settlement as a fair solution of a disturbing and complicated question.¹ The arrangement was also cordially sanctioned by Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, by eminent Protestant divines, and by

¹ In their address to the electors of West Toronto, Mr. E. F. Clarke and Mr. E. B. Osler, the Conservative candidates, said: "We do not approve of the proposed remedial legislation as a means of settling the Manitoba school difficulty. We believe rather that the settlement should be left entirely with the people of Manitoba themselves, who are the best judges of the educational requirements of the Prairie Province. We have the most abiding faith in the sense of fair play and justice of the majority, and we feel assured that if any real grievance can be shown to exist in the present school laws, it will be speedily removed by the Manitoba Legislature. Holding these views we shall actively resist and vote against any attempt to pass remedial legislation or to coerce the people of our sister province."

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the Hon. Edward Blake, who had acted as chief counsel for the Catholic minority before the Privy Council. Mr. Blake said that if, in order to succeed in the appeal, he had found it necessary to maintain that the Separate School system should be absolutely restored, he would have failed, and that it was only by taking much more limited ground that he had induced the court to touch the question at all. The judicial committee had simply decided that the Governor-General-in-Council had jurisdiction in the matter, and had left to the political authority the question of how the jurisdiction should be exercised. He considered the terms of the settlement more advantageous to the Catholic minority than any Remedial Bill which it was in the power of the Parliament of Canada to force on the Province of Manitoba.¹

But the settlement was received with bitter protest and with uncompromising hostility by the Catholic ecclesiastics. During a provincial election contest in St. Boniface, Archbishop Langevin delivered a sermon in which he told his people: "I am a bishop. I speak with authority, and I tell you, you cannot in conscience vote for a partisan of the so-called settlement, or for a candidate who proposes to try it, or who supports leaders of a party declaring in favour of the settlement. Now, you are to do as seems good to you. You are free from the

¹ Letter from the Hon. Edward Blake to the Hon. Chas. Fitzpatrick, January 20th, 1897. (*Toronto Globe*, February 16th, 1897).

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point of physical liberty. You are free to adhere to the Church or to separate from it. If you want godless schools separate from it." "But," he continued: "I have spoken as a bishop. You are free, but I cannot free you from the obligations of your consciences. You are free to separate from the Pope and the bishops. You are free to prefer other chiefs, but, know it well, that we also are free to defend the outraged Church and the threatened souls of children. You are free to remain with the family. But if you abandon it you will not sit at the family banquet. If you estrange yourselves like prodigals, do not ask your share of the inheritance. . . . I repeat, you cannot in conscience vote for a partisan of the so-called settlement, or a candidate who proposes to try it, or who supports the leader of a party declaring in favour of the settlement."

Bishop Gravel, of Nicolet, Quebec, sent out a *mandement*, in which he said: "You know that Mgr. Langevin could not possibly accept the schools that they want to give to the Catholics of his diocese. It is said in the proposed law that all the schools of Manitoba will be neutral; that it will be forbidden to speak of religion to the children except after school hours, and if the scholars will remain, if the school commissioners and the taxpayers consent thereto, and if the curé is able to go himself or send some one in his stead, to teach catechism for a half hour after class. These are difficult conditions to unite, and it would only result, even if it were

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practicable, in making the Catholic children take a dislike to religion because they would be obliged to be at catechism while their young Protestant companions were at play." Archbishop Begin, of Quebec, issued a letter to be read from the pulpits in terms quite as uncompromising. He said: "No bishop wants nor can approve the so-called settlement of the Manitoba School question, which definitely rests only upon the unjustifiable abandonment of the best established and most sacred rights of the Catholic minority. Mgr. Langevin's energetic protest against this settlement was in full accordance with the direction of the Holy Father. This is not the time to examine this settlement in its various articles, but what I have already said and written is sufficient for you to conclude that I absolutely disapprove of it. In his encyclical to the French nation, Leo XIII said: 'But the Church, the guardian and safeguard of the integrity of the faith bequeathed her by the authority of God, the founder, shall call all the nations to a Christian wisdom, and also see by what precepts and institutions we cultivate the youth who shall not be formed in mixed and neutral schools that the Church has always openly condemned, and the Church shall warn the fathers of families to watch the eminent danger for the soul in this moment.' Following the example set by other bishops of the Dominion, with a view to come to the aid of our brethren of Manitoba until justice is rendered to

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them, I ask five dollars from each curate, two dollars from each poor missionary, *vicary*, and college professor, and ten dollars from each religious community. This money shall be sent to me before Lent."

In the course of a sermon preached at New Richmond, Quebec, Father Charlevoix said: "Your duty is clear before you. You have to choose between the commands of your bishops and the misrepresentations of their enemies. You have to choose between Christ and Satan. If you despise Christ by disobeying the bishops, you must suffer as the consequences of such action the retribution that is sure to follow." On the last Sunday of 1896, a *mandement* was read from every altar in the archdiocese of Quebec banning *L'Electeur*, the chief Liberal journal of the Quebec district. The reasons advanced for this extreme action were that *L'Electeur* had repeatedly questioned the authority of the episcopate to interfere in public matters, and had ignored all remonstrances and censures. Its course upon the Manitoba school question was pronounced particularly objectionable, and was held to constitute a denial of the authority of the bishops to determine the nature, mode, and sufficiency of the education to be imparted to the Catholic children of Manitoba. The exact words in which the paper was condemned were as follows: "Invoking the holy name of God, and using the powers formally included in our episcopal jurisdiction by the tenth rule of the

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Index published by order of the Council of Trent, we, archbishop and bishops of the ecclesiastical Province of Quebec, forbid formally, under penalty of grievous sin and refusal of sacraments, anyone reading the newspaper *L'Electeur*, subscribing to it, contributing to it, selling it, encouraging it in any manner whatever. This prohibition shall extend to all ecclesiastics without exception. And because in this condemnation we do embrace not only the title of *L'Electeur*, but more especially the pernicious doctrines which that newspaper spreads among the people, we adjure the faithful at the same time to cease receiving any newspaper which would dare publish the same unsound ideas and manifest the same tendency of insubordination to the religious authorities."

The blow was infinitely damaging, but the paper, revived under the name *Le Soleil*, is still widely circulated in the Quebec district, and still vigorously champions the Liberal teachings of Mr. Laurier. In Bonaventure a bye-election for the House of Commons became necessary, and M. Guite took the field as the Liberal candidate. The Bishop of Rimouski thereupon demanded that he should sign the following document: "The Laurier-Greenway settlement of the Catholic schools of Manitoba, having been adjudged unacceptable by the authority of the bishops, I do solemnly pledge myself, on my faith and honour, to vote in the House without any restriction whatever, if I am

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elected a member, against this settlement or any other settlement which would not have been accepted by the same religious authority according to the terms of the Constitution and of the judgment of the Privy Council of Her Majesty. As an obedient son of the Church, I also pledge myself absolutely to forbid all those who shall represent me in the present electoral campaign, either on the hustings or in their private conversation with the electors, to speak one single word in favour of the Laurier-Greenway settlement, or of giving it a trial, because the same has not been accepted by the religious authority." M. Guite bravely withstood the demand. He said he would be glad if his co-religionists in Manitoba could receive even more liberal treatment, but that neither before God nor before his conscience could he renounce the liberty of exercising his franchise to the best of his judgment.

If we remember the rigid and absolute character of Catholic teaching, if we consider how the ancient Church is rooted in the reverence and affection of her children, if we reflect that many of the communities of Quebec are wholly French and Catholic, and recognize the almost divine diligence of the spiritual teachers in the ministrations of comfort and mercy, we can perhaps partly understand how sorely and sadly many Catholic Liberals faced this hard battle for the principles of free Government, and what splendid courage was needed to maintain

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the unwelcome conflict. We feel a sense of the strain and the soreness of the battle in a speech which Mr. Laurier delivered before the Club National, of Montreal, on December 30th, 1896, and on an occasion which was remarkable for the presence of Mr. Greenway, under whose administration the Manitoba school legislation was enacted. The Prime Minister there said: "I have devoted my career to the realization of an idea. I have taken the work of Confederation where I found it when I entered political life, and determined to give to it my life, and nothing will deter me from continuing to the end in my task to preserve at all price our civil liberty. Nothing will prevent me from continuing my efforts to preserve that state of society conquered by our fathers at the price of so many years and so much blood. It may be that the result of my efforts will be the Tarpeian Rock, but if that be the case I will fall without murmur or recrimination or complaint, certain that from my tomb will rise the immortal idea for which I have always fought." And there is surely a spirit of rare and high nobility in these words which he particularly addressed to the Young Liberals of the National Club: "Let me give a word of good counsel. During your career you will have to suffer many things which will appear to you as supreme injustice. Let me say to you that you should never allow your religious convictions to be affected by anything which appears to you an injustice. Let

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me ask you never to allow your religious convictions to be affected by the acts of men. Your convictions are immortal. Your convictions are not only immortal, but their base is eternal. Let your convictions be always calm, serene, and superior to the inevitable trials of life, and show to the world that Catholicism is compatible with the exercise of liberty in its highest acceptance."

The school settlement was the subject of frequent inquiry and criticism in the House of Commons in the session of 1897, but no formal resolution of censure was offered, or, in fact, ever has been offered upon Mr. Laurier's disposition of the subject. No one with authority and responsibility in public life has thought that it would be the part of prudence or of patriotism to revive the policy of the Remedial Order, or that the interests of the Catholic people of Manitoba would be well served by any further attempt at federal intervention. In the debate on the address in 1897, Sir Charles Tupper thus pronounced upon the settlement: "A settlement that does not give substantial justice, that does not meet the case, in my judgment ought not to be dignified by the name of a settlement. It may be forced upon the minority, they may be weak, they may be unable to resist, and a variety of causes may be brought into operation that will prevent them from obtaining their rights. But I am now speaking upon the position of the question in the abstract. My predecessor, Sir Mackenzie Bowell,

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when this judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was given, felt bound to bring forward a measure that was, in his judgment, calculated to carry out what the law and the Constitution of the country demanded, as declared by the highest tribunal of the Empire. I need not remind the House that, as representing the Government in this branch of the Legislature, I submitted a bill for that purpose. I need not remind the House that there was no effort that I could make that was not made, that I put forth the most strenuous efforts possible, not only on the floor of this House, but with members of the party, individually as well as collectively, for the purpose of carrying that measure to a successful conclusion. . . . When I was called upon to form an Administration, believing as I did, whether rightly or wrongly, according to the best light and information I possessed, that a wrong had been done to the minority of Manitoba, and the Government of the country were bound to right that wrong in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, I went boldly to the country, and, notwithstanding the great cleavage—that great division in the party with which I had the honour to be connected,—notwithstanding all the clamour, and agitation, and prejudice that were excited throughout the country on this question, in the faithful discharge of what I conceived to be my duty, I went forward and staked the existence of my Government upon that measure.” He concluded,

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however, that he was not bound to pursue the contest, and that the policy of federal intervention had ceased to be an essential feature of the programme of the Conservative party.¹

The Prime Minister, in reply, thus defended the settlement and declared his position: "When we came into power, we approached that question in the only way in which it should have been approached, and if it had been approached in that way first, this country would have been spared the years of agitation, which have brought it almost to the verge of civil war. We went to the Government of Manitoba, and said to them: 'The legislation of 1890 has inflicted a grievance upon the minority of Manitoba. You have the authority of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council that such is the case. Repair the grievance yourselves.' Sir, they undertook themselves to repair that grievance. We thought, and still think—and upon that issue I am ready at any time to take the verdict of the country—that the smallest measure of conciliation was far preferable to any measure of coercion. The honourable gentleman says that we obtained no concessions for the minority; he argued no less than forty minutes to prove that we obtained no restoration to the minority of the rights which they had enjoyed before. I care not what he says about that, in view of what he said immediately afterwards. He insisted that we had obtained no restoration of

¹ Hansard, March 26th, 1897, pages 38-39.

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any rights which had been enjoyed by the minority, but in the next breath he says that we have obtained new rights for the minority. I care not whether we obtained a restoration of old rights or a concession of new rights; the only thing I care for is that, whereas, under the Act of 1890, they had not the privilege of teaching their own religion in the schools, by the concessions which have been made, whether they are a concession of new rights or a restoration of old rights, they will have the right hereafter of teaching their own religion in the Province of Manitoba. . . . The position I took upon this question, I took on the floor of this Parliament, I took it in the Province of Ontario, I took it in the Province of Quebec, I maintained it everywhere, and it was this: that though the Constitution of this country gave to this Parliament and to this Government the right and power of interference with the school legislation of Manitoba, it was an extreme right, a reserved power, to be exercised only when all other means have been exhausted. Well, the moment I found that the people of Manitoba were ready to make concessions which practically restored to the Catholics the right of teaching the French language and of teaching their own religion in the schools, I submitted to my fellow-countrymen in the Province of Quebec that it was far better to obtain those concessions by negotiation than to endeavour to obtain them by means of coercion. . . . I venture at this moment to

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say that there is not a man in the Province of Quebec, there is not a man in this country, who, looking at the settlement, unbiassed, and unprejudiced, will not come to the conclusion that it was a happy solution of a very difficult situation indeed. I am perfectly aware—why should I disguise to myself a thing which stares us in the face?—I know very well that the settlement we have effected is not acceptable to certain high dignitaries in the Church to which I belong. But I have every reason to believe—nay, as day after day passes it becomes more evident—that as the facts are better understood, the conviction will take possession of every breast in this country that if we are ever to make a nation of Canada, if we are ever to solve successfully any of these difficulties that may arise, we can only solve them in the way expressed in the Speech from the Throne, by mutual concession and reciprocal good will. I might say more—I am quite free to say more. I may say that this settlement is not as advantageous as I desired myself, but I have no hesitation in saying that though it is not as advantageous as I would have desired myself, still, after six long years of agitation, when the passions of men had been aroused to the highest pitch, it was not possible to obtain more, nor for the Government of Manitoba to concede more, under present circumstances.”¹

But while the settlement was not disturbed in

¹ Hansard, March 26th, 1897, pages 64-65.

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Parliament, the Liberal party had still to overcome the desperate determination of the bishops to continue the quarrel and to accomplish the political destruction of the authors of the compromise. As a last resort a group of Catholic Liberals appealed to Rome, and Monseigneur Merry del Val was sent out to inquire into the state of the Canadian Church and to consider the policy of the bishops. This has been represented as a recognition of the supremacy of the Pope in the political affairs of Canada. As a matter of fact, it was a proper appeal by members of the Catholic Communion to the head of their Church against the intolerant action of their spiritual superiors and the Pope's vicars. No episcopal decree was ever issued as a result of Mgr. Merry del Val's discreet and sagacious inquiries, but the denunciations of the bishops ceased, and their political energy was restrained. Later, a permanent papal legate was established in Canada, as in the United States, and Liberal Catholics have been permitted to repose in peace in the bosom of their Church, and there has been a welcome abatement of clerical activity in political contests. By the end of 1900, every Catholic school in the rural districts of Manitoba had accepted the provisions of the school settlement; and while it has been more difficult to arrange satisfactory terms for merging the Catholic schools of Winnipeg into the Public School system, negotiations are in progress which promise a harmonious solution, and the final extinguishment of

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all the substantial grievances of the Catholic people. It is manifest that in Manitoba as in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Roman Catholics may enjoy full recognition of conscientious convictions under a Public School system, and practical control of the schools where they constitute the mass of the population.¹

It but remains to add that during the general election of 1900, the attitude of the bishops of Quebec was without fault and beyond criticism. The struggle for a free voice and a free vote was won in 1896, and the name of Wilfrid Laurier must be forever associated with the long contest and the final victory. Best of all, the devotion of the French Canadian people to their Church stands unimpaired. There is no lessened acceptance of its beneficent faiths, there has no virtue departed from its ancient forms and ceremonies; the priest of God has authority undiminished in the realm of conduct and morals, while political freedom comports with the dignity and independence of the citizen, fulfils

¹ Interesting pamphlets bearing on the school question are: "The Manitoba School Question," by F. C. Wade, of Winnipeg; a Reply to Mr. Wade's pamphlet by John S. Ewart, Q.C.; "The Remedial Bill, from the Point of View of a Catholic Member," by Senator L. G. Power, of Halifax; "The Manitoba School Question, a Series of Four Open Letters," by James Fisher, M.P.P., of Manitoba; "Is Manitoba Right? A Question of Ethics, Politics, Facts, and Law," by A. B. Bethune, of Winnipeg; "The Manitoba School Case, 1894," edited for the Canadian Government by the appellant's solicitors in London; and "The Canadian Clergy, Their Mission and Their Work," by L. O. David, of Montreal.

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the requirements of the Constitution, and conserves national stability. It is well, also, to remember that Mgr. Conroy, Mgr. Merry del Val, and Mgr. Falconio, successive delegates from the Papal Court, have passed condemnation upon the intolerant policy of the Quebec hierarchy, and upheld the rights of Canadian Catholics to all the constitutional privileges of British citizens.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE PREFERENTIAL TARIFF

IT has been shown that in the speech which Mr. Laurier made at Somerset in 1887 when he pronounced against commercial union with the United States as a practicable Canadian policy, he intimated his preference for a commercial alliance between Great Britain and the British Colonies over a Zollverein with the American Republic. When he came to Toronto in 1889 to defend the course of the Liberal party against federal disallowance of the Jesuit Estates Act, he declared again that he would favour a closer commercial alliance between Canada and Great Britain. He insisted, however, that no such alliance could be formed except upon the basis of free trade, and that in view of the large revenues which Canada must collect we were bound to maintain a revenue tariff. He therefore for the time-being rejected commercial union with Great Britain as something which could not be obtained, and argued for a wide reciprocity with the United States as a possible policy under which very material benefits must accrue to the Canadian people.

This was probably the view at the moment of the great mass of Canadians, while there were

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unquestionably sharp and distinct differences of opinion as to what measure of reciprocity Canada, with a due respect for her national integrity and a due regard for established interests, could afford to accept. It would be idle to deny that the resolutions adopted at the National Liberal Convention in 1893 modified, or at least more clearly defined, the trade policy of the party, and better expressed the dominant feeling of Liberals towards the United States and the Mother Country. These resolutions declared that the tariff should be so adjusted as to make free, or bear as lightly as possible upon, the necessities of life, and should be so arranged as to promote freer trade with the whole world, and more particularly with Great Britain and the United States. They attacked the principle of protection as radically unsound, and unjust to the masses of the people, and declared for a fiscal policy, which while not doing injustice to any class, would promote foreign and domestic trade and afford substantial relief from the burdens under which the country laboured.

The time was peculiarly opportune for the advocacy of tariff reform in Canada. Mr. Cleveland had just achieved his great victory over the organized protectionists of the United States. The campaign of the Democrats had considerably influenced opinion in Canada. Even Sir John Thompson admitted imperfections in the Canadian tariff, and declared that mouldering branches must be lopped

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away; while the Government instituted a series of tariff hearings with a view to adjustment and modification of existing duties.¹ The position of Liberals was also measurably affected by their practical alliance for the campaign of 1896 with Mr. D'Alton McCarthy and the Patrons of Industry. Mr. McCarthy, from a staunch protectionist, had become an aggressive tariff reformer and a vigorous apostle of the teaching of the orthodox economists. The Patrons were an off-shoot from the farmers' organizations of the United States, and their demands embraced simplification of the laws and machinery of government, limitation of public subsidies, protection against industrial combinations, and a tariff for revenue.

The platform of the Equal Rights League, of which Mr. McCarthy was president, demanded that the tariff should be made less burdensome to the consuming masses; should be lowered just so far as was consistent with a due regard to the financial requirements of the country; and that a preference should be given in Canadian markets to Great Britain, and a like privilege extended to other countries that would deal with Canada on terms of fair trade. "This," they said, "involves what is known as a maximum and a minimum tariff, now common in some of the continental states of Europe, minimum to England and to our colonial

¹ Speech of Sir John Thompson, at the banquet of the Toronto Board of Trade, January 5th, 1893.

brethren who reciprocate with us, and to those foreign countries who are willing to trade on fair terms; maximum to such countries as the United States, who impose an excessive, and in some cases almost prohibitive duty against our products, so long as that attitude is maintained." The Patron platform declared in specific terms for a revenue tariff so adjusted as to fall upon the luxuries rather than the necessities of life, for reciprocal trade under fair and equitable conditions between Canada and other countries, and for the free admission into Canada of cotton, tweeds, woollens, workmen's tools, farm implements, fence wire, binder twine, coal oil, iron and corn. The Conservative party squarely antagonized these various propositions, adhered to the principle of protection, and argued for a preferential tariff arrangement with Great Britain.

During the parliamentary session of 1892 we had the first distinct presentation of the tariff policy which the Laurier Government finally adopted. Mr. McNeill of North Bruce then submitted a resolution affirming that if and when the Parliament of Great Britain should admit Canadian products to the markets of the United Kingdom upon more favourable terms than it accords to the products of foreign countries, the Parliament of Canada would be prepared to accord corresponding advantages by a substantial reduction in the duties upon British manufactured goods.¹ The resolution was met by

¹ Hansard, April 25th, 1892, page 1,555.

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the Liberal Opposition with an amendment to the effect that as Great Britain admitted the products of Canada into her ports free of duty, the scale of Canadian duties exacted on goods mainly imported from Great Britain should be reduced.¹ This was a tactical move of some advantage to the Liberal party, and in subsequent discussions was distinctly embarrassing to the Administration. The Conservative party, however, stood firmly by the system of protection, and based many of their arguments for a preferential tariff on the failure of free trade in Great Britain and the necessity for British duties against foreign countries in order to hold her own markets and survive the competition of the industries of Germany and the United States. The Government, in fact, trusted to the strength of protectionist sentiment to overcome the disintegrating effects within the Conservative party of the agitation against interference with the school legislation of Manitoba, and it became therefore the chief object of their campaign to unite the business interests of the country in defence of existing conditions. The Liberal platform and the speeches of the Liberal leaders were interpreted as declarations for summary and absolute free trade, and the consequent destruction of Canadian industry and ruin of Canadian manufacturers was persistently and strenuously predicted.

The Liberal leaders could not ignore these repre-

¹ Hansard, April 25th, 1892, page 1,623.

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sentations. It was necessary to give assurances that no revolutionary proceeding was contemplated, and that a revenue tariff by no means involved the immediate and complete abolition of all customs duties. In a speech at Montreal, as, in fact, on many other occasions, Mr. Laurier dealt with these charges, and showed that in order to meet the demands of revenue a high scale of customs taxes must be maintained, and that in moving towards free trade progress must be slow, gradual, careful, and deliberate. On June 2nd, in the heat of the electoral canvass, he addressed a letter to Mr. George H. Bertram, of Toronto, in which we have a definite statement of his policy and purpose. "The intention of the Liberal party," he said, "is not and never was to establish absolute free trade in this country. The question was discussed at Ottawa, but, after anxious consideration, while fully recognizing the superiority of the British system of freedom of trade as an abstract principle, the convention came to the conclusion that, under the existing conditions of our country, the fiscal policy best adapted to its requirements, its economic situation, its enormous financial obligations, is a revenue tariff; that is to say, a tariff levying our revenue from custom duties, the basis of which would be the amount necessary to carry on the business of the country." He said further: "I submit also that, apart from the community as a whole, the manufacturers have not only nothing to suffer

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but much to gain from the substitution of a revenue tariff for the present system. A revenue tariff being based upon the fixed charges of the country, and not, therefore, subject to fluctuations and alterations made to suit and please now one interest and now another, would establish these conditions of stability and permanency, which, experience has shown, are essential to the security and prosperity of the manufacturing interests. Moreover, I think I can confidently appeal to the experience of the business community that, with the exception of monopolies and combines, all manufacturing interests would welcome a change of policy on the lines I have indicated." He concurred, he said, with Mr. Bertram in the hope and belief "that the advent of the Liberal party to power would place political parties in Canada in the same position as political parties in England who have no tariff issue distracting the country every election."

These and like statements by other Liberal leaders, by the Liberal press and by individual Liberal candidates, somewhat steadied opinion among manufacturers, traders, and bankers; and while the more rigid protectionists naturally adhered to the Government, and were characteristically active in support of Conservative candidates, there was less of the unaffected alarm and incipient panic which other contests had excited. In fact the school question rather than the trade policy of the Liberal party was the dominant issue of the campaign; and

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all that can be said is that probably many electors voted for Conservative candidates who would have refused to go to the polls, or would have cast their ballots against the remedial policy, if the question of protection could have been eliminated.

The question of preferential trade with Great Britain had been long discussed by such Canadian publicists as Mr. D'Alton McCarthy, Col. Geo. T. Denison, Dr. Geo. R. Parkin, and Principal Grant of Queen's University. Within the Conservative as within the Liberal party there was a growing sympathy for the proposition. The idea had lately received distinct recognition and encouragement from Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary in the Salisbury Cabinet, and perhaps the most forceful personality in British politics. It seemed impossible that Canadian protectionists could accept the basis of preferential trade laid down by Mr. Chamberlain. Nevertheless the Conservative press and Conservative speakers maintained an active advocacy of the project, and it is, perhaps, not uncharitable to think that their object was to put the loyalty of Liberals to the Empire under suspicion, and rouse the British sentiment which found expression when commercial union with the United States was under consideration. But, however this may be, the question was projected into the contest, and Mr. Laurier found it necessary to consider the attacks of his opponents and to declare his views on the subject. Mr. Chamberlain had said in substance

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that the principle which must be accepted if we are to make even the slightest progress towards preferential trade, is that within the different parts of the Empire protection must disappear, and that the duties must be revenue duties and not protective duties in the sense of protecting the products of one part of the Empire against those of another part.¹ Mr. Laurier was able to argue from this and other utterances of British statesmen and British journals, that lower duties must be substituted for existing protectionist imposts as an essential step in any advance towards a preferential trading arrangement with Great Britain.

In a speech delivered at London on June 3rd, 1896, Mr. Laurier said: "Now the statesmen of Great Britain have thought that the colonies have come to a time when a new step must be taken in their development. What is that? That there shall be a commercial agreement between England and the colonies. That practical statesman, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, has come to the conclusion that the time has come when it is possible to have within the bounds of the Empire a new step taken, which will give to the colonies, in England, a preference for their products over the products of other nations. What would be the possibilities of such a step if it were taken? We sell our goods in England, we sell our wheat, our

¹ Speech at the dinner of the Canadian Club in London, March 25th, 1896.

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butter, our cheese, all our natural products, but these have to compete with similar products from the United States, from Russia, and from other nations. Just see what a great advantage it would be to Canada if the wheat, cheese, and butter which we send to England should be met in England with a preference over similar products of other nations. The possibilities are immense. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the new and progressive Secretary of the Colonies, has declared that the time has come when it is possible to discuss the question. But, sir, if England is going to give us that preference, England would expect something from us in return. What is it she would expect? England would expect that we would come as closely to her own system of free trade, such as she has it, as it is possible for us to come. England does not expect that we would take her own system of free trade, such as she has it, but I lay it before you that the thing the English people would expect in return is that instead of the principle of protection, we should adopt the revenue form of tariff, pure and simple." It will be shown later that Mr. Chamberlain held that even revenue duties on British manufactures were fatal to the consummation of a British Zollverein.

These then were the trade issues which entered into the contest of 1896, and this the position of the controversy when the Liberal party came into office in Canada. There was undoubtedly uneasiness

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among manufacturers and some fear among all classes who were concerned in industrial operations and interested in financial and banking institutions that revolutionary tariff legislation would be introduced, investments prejudiced or destroyed, the business of the country thrown into confusion, labour displaced, and commerce embarrassed and depressed. It is the work of a day to create a protectionist system. It is a delicate and difficult undertaking to scale down duties, and establish freer trade conditions without doing damage and injustice to industries which have been created by tariff legislation. The Liberal Ministers were bound in unmistakable pledges to proceed with caution and with deliberation, and they thoroughly understood that violent and inconsiderate action would create commercial instability and panic, revive protectionist sentiment, and discredit the cause of tariff reform. They therefore instituted a tariff commission, which met the manufacturers, traders, and producers at various centres throughout the country. The commissioners gave earnest and sympathetic consideration to all reasonable representations, and in the main, the protected interests presented their arguments in cordial, candid, and straightforward fashion. They took it for granted that while the Ministers were most concerned to promote the welfare of the masses of the people, they would prefer to benefit rather than to injure established industries, and that enterprise would be

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recognized and investments protected in so far as the interests of capital and labour and the stability of the commercial fabric demanded. These tariff hearings did much to restore public confidence, and to prepare the country for a progressive but safe and moderate measure of tariff adjustment.

On April 25th, 1897, the new tariff was brought down in Parliament, and it is not exaggeration to say that no fiscal measure of more far-reaching significance was ever framed by a Canadian Ministry. It gave substantial relief to consumers and producers. It was a bold step in Imperial unity. It introduced the principle of minimum and maximum tariffs, and practically adopted the Davies resolution of 1892 in favour of preferential treatment of British products. In brief, the iron and steel duties were reduced from \$1.50 to \$1.00 a ton, and the bounty increased by \$1.00 a ton. The taxes on barb wire and binder twine were abolished. Corn was placed on the free list. The flour duty was reduced. There was a reduction equal to 22 per cent. of the duties on refined sugar. Duties on the raw material of many farm necessities were reduced. The tax on uncleaned rice was increased, as were also the taxes on liquor and tobacco. There was a general substitution of *ad valorem* for specific duties, and this also involved substantial reduction of imposts. The classifications were reduced and simplified. Provision was made that the duties on goods produced under trusts and combinations

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could be summarily reduced or abolished. There was also, as the distinguishing feature of the measure, an immediate reduction of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on British goods, and provision for a further reduction to 25 per cent. on July 1st, 1898. In a few cases, particularly in cottons, the duties were increased, but this seemed to be necessary in order to give fair scope for the reduction of 25 per cent. on goods admitted under the special tariff. This special tariff was not, as then framed, a direct discrimination in favour of Great Britain. The German and Belgian treaties, which will be discussed later, disabled Canada from such direct discrimination in favour of the Mother Country. It was therefore provided that the minimum tariff should apply to any country which admitted the goods of Canada at rates as low or lower than were prescribed by the special schedules. This limited the application of the special tariff to Great Britain and New South Wales, and providing Canada could secure relief from British favoured nation treaties, accomplished the purpose of the Canadian Government. It is convenient to say now that in 1898 West India sugar was admitted into Canada at the lower rate of taxation, and that in 1900 the duties on British goods were further reduced from 25 per cent. to $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. below the figures of the general tariff.

The country received the general provisions of the new tariff with marked favour and the British

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preference with positive enthusiasm. The Conservative attack was directed against the constitutional aspects of the measure rather than against its readjustments of the scale of taxation. It is true that at the moment it was denounced as a deadly blow at important Canadian industries.¹ But when it was found that trade prospered, industries flourished, and new life was infused into all the channels of Canadian commerce, ground was shifted, and it was thought better to describe the new fiscal policy as a practical ratification of the old protectionist system. In fact, the measure has never been subjected to any consistent line of attack. It is sometimes denounced as unduly favourable to the United States, sometimes as calculated in its practical operation to crush out Canadian industries in order to facilitate British imports, sometimes as unmitigated protection. There is no doubt that the principle of protection still remains in the tariff, and that a measure of advantage is undoubtedly retained for Canadian manufacturers and producers. This is inevitable under any tariff designed to raise the revenues necessary to the financial needs of the country, and is perhaps essential to the growth and stability of commercial and manufacturing operations in Canada in face of the American method of slaughtering goods in outside markets and the lower freight rates enjoyed by many

¹ See the speech of Sir Charles Tupper in the House of Commons, April 26th, 1897, page 1,291.

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American exporters as against the charges exacted by Canadian railways for the carriage of Canadian products. Great distances and a small population compel some of these inequalities, and twenty years of extreme protection necessarily brought into existence many industries which could not meet low tariff conditions, and could not be summarily subjected to the free and unobstructed competition of British and foreign manufacturers. Practical statesmen must deal in a practical way with existing conditions, and aside from considerations of prudence and equity, the leaders of the Liberal party were doubly pledged against rash and revolutionary legislation.

But it is vain to argue that the Fielding tariff was not a substantial measure of reform. The special tariff on British goods materially encouraged and cheapened importations from Britain, and many of the duties on farm supplies and household necessaries were lowered, to the advantage alike of the consumers and the revenue. In fact, if the British preference had not been introduced as the essential feature of the tariff, it would probably have been attacked as a relentless free trade measure, and have evoked the strenuous and enduring hostility of the protectionist classes. No better defence of the Fielding tariff from the standpoint of the Government need be offered than that of Lord Farrer, who was for very many years the leader of the old free trade guard in

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England. Lord Farrer said: "No reasonable free trader wishes to see a system of protection which has been in force for many years, and under which industries of various kinds have grown up, abolished at a single blow. Such a step would be both unjust and unwise. What free traders desire is a much more moderate and a safer course. They wish to see the colonies abandon protection as a theory, and gradually reduce the most obnoxious of their present protective duties. This would probably, by increasing importation itself, increase revenue and make further reduction possible. Gradually the colonies would thus approach, and ultimately attain the state of things which obtains in the United Kingdom without undue sacrifice of revenue, and without injustice to existing interests. But it is out of the question to do this except cautiously and by degrees, as, indeed it was done in this country. This is what we may hope for under the new régime in Canada. . . . The value of Mr. Laurier's proposal is that it makes no retrograde step, and violates no free trade principles. So far as Canada is concerned, it is not complete free trade, but it is a step from protection towards free trade—just the same kind of step as we made ourselves in the old Huskisson days, when we approached free trade by the way of reciprocity. At the present moment it would be a step backward if taken by the Mother Country; it is a step forward when taken by Canada."

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The opponents of the Government stood on firmer ground, however, when they denied the constitutional competency of Canada to enact the British preference in face of the German and Belgian treaties. The treaty with Belgium of 1862 and that with the German Zollverein of 1865 prevented differential treatment by British colonies in favour of the United Kingdom, unless the concessions were also extended to all foreign powers which enjoyed favoured nation treaties with the Mother Country. They did not, however, prevent differential treatment by Great Britain in favour of British colonies, nor differential treatment by British colonies in favour of each other. Long, persistent, and fruitless effort had been made to secure relief from these treaties. Canada, in 1892, during the premiership of Sir John Abbott, had made representations on the subject, and the Colonial Conference, which met at Ottawa in 1894, adopted and forwarded to the Home Government a strong remonstrance against the restrictions which these treaties imposed upon the fiscal liberty of the colonies, and an urgent appeal for their abrogation. But the protest was ineffectual. The Imperial Government answered through Lord Ripon, Colonial Secretary, that to denounce the treaties would involve risk to the commerce of the United Kingdom with Germany and Belgium, and would require such trade to be carried on "under fiscal conditions, subject to constant changes and fluctuations, or, at all events,

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without that permanence and security which is of primary importance to successful and profitable interchange." He pointed out also that no scheme had been proposed which promised any precise advantages to be secured to the export trade from the United Kingdom to the colonies in the event of the termination of the treaties with Belgium and Germany.¹

This was the position when the Fielding tariff was brought down in the Canadian Parliament, and when objection was made by the Conservatives that these treaties were fatal to its enactment and operation. It is true that the Canadian tariff was not a direct discrimination in favour of Great Britain, or rather it was true that any low tariff country could take advantage of its provisions. But practically it offered material advantages only to Great Britain, and this was clearly the intent and purpose of the Canadian Administration. Mr. Laurier and his colleagues had boldly challenged the policy of the Mother Country, and it rested with British Ministers to say that the German and Belgian treaties were inoperative in the circumstances, to denounce the treaties, or to inform Canada that her discrimination in favour of the Empire, and pledge of loyal devotion could not be accepted. If, however, the boon were rejected, the Canadian Government must be discredited and humiliated, and public confidence in its discretion and sagacity

¹ Statistical Year Book of Canada, 1894, page 305.

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greatly impaired. It was, in fact, vital to the credit and reputation of Canadian Ministers that the British preference should go into effect, and that the German and Belgian treaties should be denounced.

The year in which the Fielding tariff was adopted in Canada was the sixtieth anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. The event was commemorated by a great jubilee celebration in London, and Mr. Laurier crossed over to represent Canada in the ceremonies. But beyond conspicuous participation in this remarkable home-coming of the British people, he had serious practical business to perform. Popular opinion in the Old Country had received the Canadian tariff with gratitude and acclamation, and it was now necessary to persuade British Ministers to recognize the rising Imperial sentiment of all parts of the Empire, and legitimize the action of Canada by abrogating the German and Belgian treaties. Mr. Laurier was thoroughly informed as to the conditions of opinion in Great Britain. He knew that the Liberal party adhered with rigid tenacity to the old free trade doctrines of Bright and Cobden, and that very few among the leaders of the Conservative party would tamper with any form of protectionism. He knew that the economic sensitiveness of free traders was easily touched, and that he must be infinitely discreet in all his public references to the new Canadian tariff and to the commercial relationships between Great

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Britain and the colonies. If he had associated his exposition of the motives which led Canada to offer the British preference with a demand for preferential treatment of Canadian goods in British markets, he would at once have excited the free trade press to vigorous attack upon his policy and his demands, popular opinion would have been roused to regard the Canadian tariff as only the first step toward a system of Imperial protection, and such influences would have been arrayed against the Canadian policy and in defence of the German and Belgian treaties, that British Ministers would perhaps have hesitated to act, the wave of sympathetic enthusiasm for Canada would have been substantially checked, and we should not have recovered our fiscal freedom. But Mr. Laurier wisely considered British sentiment. He presented the Canadian preference as a free gift to the old land, designed alike to promote Imperial trade and Imperial unity, and so won immensely upon British opinion, and greatly fashioned the public temper which persuaded the Imperial Government to denounce the treaties which stood in the way of effectual adoption of the Canadian tariff. It is doubtful if we have yet recognized the full magnitude of the service thus performed for Canada and the Empire, the bold and brilliant method of Mr. Laurier's diplomacy, and the far-reaching significance of the policy of the Canadian Government.

There remained still other work for Mr. Laurier



SPY'S SKETCH OF LAURIER

From "Vanity Fair," London

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to do at Westminster. There was held in connection with the Jubilee celebration an Imperial conference at which the various colonies were represented by their Premiers, and some subjects of great colonial and Imperial concern exhaustively considered. While no conclusions of special consequence were reached, the discussions were doubtless useful and profitable. The Home authorities exhibited a special interest in the question of Imperial defence, and sought to learn the mind of the colonies with regard to direct or indirect contributions for the maintenance of the defensive forces of the Empire. The colonial view, however, was not materially modified by the representations of British Ministers. This view, in short, was that the colonies were developing great stretches of the Imperial domain, that they had to meet heavy expenditures for the construction of railways and other great public undertakings, that there was no comparison between the domestic obligations and requirements of a finished country like England, and a new and virgin territory like Canada, that the growth of the colonies was substantially growth and strengthening for the Empire, and that until the heavy burden of colonial development was materially reduced, direct contributions for Imperial defence could not be fairly exacted. While there is force and validity in this reasoning there is yet a further word to be said on the question. The sea power of Britain is the fortress of British trade, and the main guarantee of peace in

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the world; and whether in peace or in war, the maintenance of these world-circling fleets bears heavily upon British taxpayers. We enjoy the protection and security which this armament maintains, and while we may be reluctant to vote direct contributions to be expended by the British authorities, it is not at all clear that we should not make an indirect contribution of men or ships to the navy, and relieve Britain of all responsibility for the defences of Canada. These responsibilities we should have to meet if we were an independent country, and we have no right to accept a less obligation as a part of the British Empire. It is true that British connection may involve us in quarrels that as an independent country we would escape, and it is perhaps equally true that connection with the Empire saves us from perils that we could hardly confront as an independent community. There is, therefore, a further word to be said on the question, and Canada will hardly shirk any legitimate obligation which falls upon her as an integral part of the British dominions. There is, at this writing, an active and increasing interest in the proposition advanced by Col. Geo. T. Denison, and the Canadian Branch of the British Empire League, in favour of imposing a special duty of 5 per cent. upon all foreign goods imported into Great Britain and the colonies in order to create a common fund for Imperial defence.

The question of preferential trade between the

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colonies and the United Kingdom was also discussed with British Ministers. We have had the persistent assertion in Canada that Mr. Laurier rejected a direct offer of preferential treatment of Canadian products in British markets. Even such a careful work as that of Prof. John Davidson on "Commercial Federation and Colonial Trade Policy," gives countenance to this assumption. "To many Canadians," says Prof. Davidson, "it seemed then and seems still to have been a grand mistake not to make the concession, (that is, the British preference) the basis of negotiations, and there have not been wanting those who declare that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was false to the interests of Canada when he failed to demand a reciprocal concession, and still more, when he later repudiated the idea of making such a demand. This feeling is not confined to his political and outwitted opponents. Many of his supporters, who are in party bound to defend his policy in public, do not hesitate to express in private their regret that their leader failed to take advantage of his undoubted opportunities. It seemed so natural to strike while the iron of British prejudice was at the white heat of the jubilee year, and reap the full advantage of the sentiment which the Canadian offer evoked. He had placed himself on record as being in favour of preferential treatment in the English market, and it seemed the very refinement of punctiliousness not to ask and receive at such a time what he and

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every Canadian wanted, and not an Englishman of them all would at that time have refused to grant. Lewd politicians of the baser sort have suggested that it was the prospect of the Cobden Club medal that made him thus betray the interests of Canada."

It is true that Professor Davidson goes on to argue that while Mr. Laurier may have been false to the interests of Canada, he was true to the interests of the Empire; that a reciprocal concession might have been made in the haste of sentiment, to be repented of in the leisure of experience; that the Canadian Premier showed good taste as well as good statesmanship in refusing to take advantage of a jubilee enthusiasm; and that to have rushed matters then would have been detrimental to the interests of the Empire, and would have created within a few months a party in English politics hostile to the colonies, which is the very last thing an imperially-minded statesman would desire to create.¹

This is perhaps a plausible explanation of Mr. Laurier's course, but the writer misunderstood some of the essential features of the situation. The critics of the Canadian Prime Minister speak with some warrant when they say that he was invited to consider a proposition for preferential trade within the Empire. The proposition, however, involved the absolute removal of all Canadian duties upon British manufactures, and upon no other basis would Mr.

¹ "Commercial Federation and Colonial Trade Policy," by Professor John Davidson, pages 75, 76.

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Chamberlain even consider preferential treatment of Canadian products. If Mr. Laurier could have accepted these terms on behalf of Canada, and the other colonies could have been induced to join in the agreement, Mr. Chamberlain, at least, stood ready to advocate the proposal before the British people and the agitation for a British Zollverein would have assumed active form and shape in British politics. But considerations of revenue, aside altogether from the position of Canadian industries, necessitated the rejection of the proposition, and there are probably few persons in Canada who believe that Mr. Laurier could have decided otherwise under the circumstances. When we reflect that important Canadian industries now profess to be suffering from the competition which the British preference directly sanctions and promotes, and that the Australian Commonwealth has just adopted a protectionist tariff, we can see what small option of choice in the premises was left to the Prime Minister of Canada. Nor is it clear that Mr. Chamberlain spoke, or professed to speak, for the British Cabinet.

On the subject of these conferences, or at least upon the question of preferential trade, Mr. Chamberlain has since said: "If there were to be any kind of fiscal arrangement with the colonies, I believe the only form that would meet with the slightest favour would be an Imperial Zollverein in which there would be free trade between the

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portions of the Empire and duties as against strangers." When asked point blank during the same debate in the Imperial Parliament if he had offered preferential trade to Canada, the Colonial Secretary answered: "I have never done anything of the sort. It is one of those mistakes of which I am so largely the victim, and which, perhaps it would hardly be worth while to contradict, until the occasion becomes urgent."¹ The Duke of Devonshire in a letter to the Hon. Wm. Mulock was equally definite. He wrote: "While I congratulated Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Dominion of Canada on the offer which has been made to admit British goods at reduced rates, as compared with those on the goods of other nations, as an important step in the direction of Imperial unity, I have no authority to offer, and did not offer to Canada a preference in British markets."² Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the uncompromising leader of the rigid free trade element in the Conservative party of Great Britain, declared at Liverpool a year or two ago that he did not believe in the idea of preferential duties in favour of the colonies as compared with foreign countries on the imports of the United Kingdom. Any such duties would be dangerous in

¹ See Mr. Chamberlain's speech on a motion by Mr. Hedderwick in favour of direct representation of the colonies in the Imperial Parliament, April 3rd, 1900.

² Letter from the Duke of Devonshire to the Hon. Wm. Mulock, May 2nd, 1899.

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the utmost degree to the foreign trade, which was essential to the prosperity of Great Britain. But he entirely sympathized with the remark attributed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Prime Minister of Canada, when he said that in his opinion an Imperial Zollverein could not possibly be attainable without absolute free trade within the Empire. This great question could only be approached and dealt with on the principle of free trade, and any attempt to deal with it on any other principle was unkind and unfair to the colonies themselves. His own opinion was that any person in the colonies or in Great Britain who founded his views as to the future on the possibility of any solution of this question, except on the basis of free trade, was founding his views upon a foundation of sand, and he would not for the world, having some experience in matters of this kind, hold out to his fellow-subjects in the colonies that Great Britain could deal with the question on any other basis than free trade.¹

It may be that on preferential trade, as on Imperial defence, the last word has not been said. No one can say that free trade is the irrevocable policy of Great Britain, or that an advance towards freer trade may not characterize future colonial policy. The hostile tariffs of other great manufacturing nations, and the pressure of foreign competition in British markets may force the Mother

¹ Speech at Liverpool, October 24th, 1900.

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Country to re-arm herself with protectionist duties, if only for the purpose of negotiating reciprocity treaties with her more formidable rivals. There may even arise in Great Britain the feeling that colonial competition is only less objectionable than foreign competition, and as in the exclusion of Canadian live cattle from British ports, her legislation may look only to the protection and promotion of the interests of the population of the British Islands. For the moment, however, as Mr. Chamberlain has said: "We have a proposal by British free-traders which is rejected by the British colonies; we have a proposal by colonial protectionists which is rejected by Great Britain."¹ The signs of the hour point to growth in Imperial unity, if not so directly to an Imperial trade alliance. We in Canada have discriminated in favour of British manufactures, established Imperial penny postage, contributed heavily towards the construction of the Pacific Cable, and spent freely in men and money for the cause of the Empire in South Africa. We shall doubtless go on and improve direct cable communication between this country and Great Britain, and perfect, it may be at heavy cost, the facilities for ocean transportation between Canadian and British ports. All this has its Imperial as well as its Canadian aspect, and Canadians may feel that they are discharging, in full measure, all their legitimate obligations

¹ Mr. Chamberlain at a dinner of the Canadian Club in London, March 25th, 1896.

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to the Mother Country. It is necessary to add at the risk of misunderstanding, that it is not easy to conceive a Zollverein arrangement that would not restrict the freedom of the colonies, and tend with changing circumstances to produce irritation and unrest; and that the trade relations between Great Britain and the colonies will probably be better controlled by concurrent legislation than by a joint tariff.¹

It has been explained that the Fielding tariff

¹ "It must not be forgotten that at present about one-fourth of the export trade of this country consists of foreign and colonial produce, and that the imposition of duties on foreign produce would involve an enormous immediate outlay for the extension of bonding facilities, and the necessary charges for their use and maintenance. The result would be to place such obstacles in the way of this trade that its transference elsewhere would speedily take place, goods which this country now receives for export being sent direct to their market, or through some other *entrepôt* where they would not be subjected to such disabilities. Thus the position of this country as the great market of the world, already threatened, would be destroyed. These changes could not fail to seriously injure our important carrying trade and react injuriously on every industry in the United Kingdom. On the other hand the gain to the colonies, whatever it might be, would, even at first, be altogether incommensurate with the loss to the Mother Country. And it is improbable that there would be any permanent gain, for, apart from the general loss of purchasing power due to the fall in wages and profits resulting from the imposition of duties, it is obvious that the reduction of our imports from foreign countries would be followed by a reduction in our exports to them, no inconsiderable part of which consists of colonial produce imported in a crude state, and more or less manufactured in this country. The demand, therefore, for colonial produce, even with the preferential advantage proposed to be allowed to it, would not be likely to increase, and the price obtained for it would, therefore, not be ultimately enhanced."—Reply of the Marquess of Ripon to the Resolutions of the Colonial Conference of 1894.

provided a lower scale of duties for the goods of such countries as admitted the products of Canada on terms as favourable as the rates fixed by our minimum schedules. It was found, however, that owing to the operation of the most-favoured-nation treaties with Great Britain, complications were likely to arise under these provisions. Mr. Chamberlain, in dealing with this point at the Imperial conference, said: "Let me suppose, for instance, that Holland offered these advantages, thereupon Canada would be compelled to give the same terms to Holland as she now offers to the Mother Country. She would then be bound by most-favoured-nation treaties to give the same terms to practically every important commercial country in the world." Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that the difficulty could be obviated by confining the preferential offer to Great Britain. It does not appear that the position of the United States was considered by Mr. Chamberlain, or that the change afterwards made had any special reference to that country. The difficulty arose mainly through treaty arrangements between Great Britain and other European powers. In June, 1898, therefore, the preferential tariff was amended so as to apply only to Great Britain and such British colonies as give favourable terms to Canadian products, and this change took effect on August 1st, 1898. The limitation of the preference to Great Britain, although necessitated by Imperial treaties, was in consonance with Canadian opinion, and

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represents probably the exact policy that the Canadian Government would have adopted in 1897 if the German and Belgian treaties had not seemed to forbid direct preferential treatment of the Mother Country.

Mr. Laurier received many honours in England, and made a remarkable and enduring impression upon the British people. He accepted honorary degrees from Oxford and Cambridge, and with reluctance, a knighthood from the Sovereign. His reluctance to receive knighthood was not due to any mere contempt for titles, nor to any particular desire to cultivate democratic opinion. He simply was averse on personal grounds to the acceptance of decorations, and to a distinction which seemed not quite consistent with his simple living and political training. He recognized, however, that his refusal of knighthood under the exceptional circumstances would seem ungracious and even pretentious, and would be misunderstood and misrepresented. He therefore accepted the recognition, and has never thought it necessary to explain or justify his action. He was one of the few conspicuous figures of the Jubilee celebrations, and in fact from the moment that he delivered his first speech at Liverpool he took rank as an Imperial statesman. His courteous bearing, gift of speech, and grasp of mind all had a singular charm for the English people, and there was a freshness and vigour about his addresses that contrasted favourably with the unemo-

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tional oratory of British politicians. He put Canada before the British people, not as a sucking infant clinging to the Mother Country, but as a free, self-governing kingdom, and Canadians, not as an inferior order of half-caste Britons, but as fellow-subjects of Englishmen at home, seeking neither gift nor favour, and asserting full sovereignty within their own domain. It can be said with literal truth that the English press has spoken of Sir Wilfrid Laurier with as much warmth and as much enthusiasm as has ever been exhibited by the Liberal press of Canada even in the heat of an election campaign, and that without one qualifying or discordant note; while at the clubs and in country houses his charm of manner, his simplicity and quiet gravity, and store of literary and historical fact and anecdote deepened the impression of elegance and force which his public addresses had created.

He was hardly less successful in handling the press and the public opinion of Paris. The French press had got into quite an ugly mood over the language of his speeches in England, and met the Canadian visitor with few cordial words on his arrival at the French capital. But the Premier made two or three addresses, frank, sincere, and manly, speaking in Paris just what he had spoken in London, and the press was disarmed, and the best opinion of France won over, while his fine qualities of heart and mind and straightforward candour and courage

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received cordial recognition. He accomplished this by no trick of platform legerdemain or specious juggling with words, but by a plain, frank expression of his feeling as a man of French blood and birth, and a reasoned, deliberate, eloquent assertion of pride and satisfaction in his British citizenship. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has always been great enough to know that in order to be a good Catholic it is not necessary to flout and insult Protestantism, and that in order to be a loyal and self-respecting British subject, it is not necessary to throw gibes and sneers at other countries. His attitude in Paris, therefore, was that of one who had no shame for his French birth and blood, and only admiration and reverence for the brilliant French people and their noble work for human civilization, but still of one who from his birth was a British subject, and felt it a simple duty, despite his race and blood, to declare his personal love for British institutions, and the unquestioning loyalty of his country to the British Empire. Surely there have been few more suggestive incidents, even in British history, than the pilgrimage of this courtly, gifted, eloquent descendant of the founders of New France and of the race of Montcalm, to the Imperial capital, whence Wolfe had his commission to plant the British flag on the rock of Quebec; thence on to old France, to the ancient seat of the Bourbon kings, whence Montcalm was sent out to hold Quebec for his country; and there to speak as the

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first citizen of a Quebec bound inviolably to Britain, and to glorify British rule in the New World. This is the very romance of history.

Among men of all parties and of all races in Canada there was genuine pride in the recognition which Sir Wilfrid Laurier received in Great Britain, and a very general consciousness that he had greatly served the interests of his country. His home-coming was marked by sincere and generous demonstrations of popular welcome. Bonfires blazed all along the St. Lawrence from Quebec to Montreal, the Capital received him back with unaffected cordialty, and later, in the presence of the most distinguished representatives of all classes, professions, interests, and parties, he was banquetted by the Boards of Trade of Montreal and Toronto, where hearty gratitude was expressed by the selected spokesmen of a united people for his great and effectual services to Canada.

CHAPTER XXVII

IMPERIALISM AND RACIALISM

THE preferential tariff and other Imperial measures of the Liberal Government, coupled with Sir Wilfrid Laurier's visit to the Old Country, and the surprising growth of Imperial sentiment which these measures and events directly stimulated alike in Canada and in the British Islands, had much to do in fashioning that public temper which sent colonial contingents to the aid of the Empire in South Africa. It is not necessary here to review at length the relations between Dutch and British in the Transvaal, and the course of the negotiations to secure rights of citizenship for the Uitlanders without resort to arms. Probably war was hardly contemplated by the British Government until the British provinces of Natal and the Cape Colony were invaded by the burghers of the Free State and the Transvaal. Few of us now doubt the necessity for the war from the standpoint of British interests and British supremacy. Few of us doubt that Mr. Kruger plotted and waited, resolved to strike at some perilous moment in the fortunes of the Empire. Few of us doubt that if the Transvaal had not issued its insolent ultimatum the war would not have come, and the good Queen would not have

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gone down to the grave with sorrow in her heart and tears upon her cheeks for the slain of her Imperial household upon the battlefields and in the camps and hospitals of South Africa.

But while this is true we shrink from any searching examination of the methods employed alike by Dutch and English to heat the blood and inflame the passions of the two races. It has been made very clear that when the fatuous and criminal Jameson raid had failed, the capitalists of the Rand proceeded deliberately and systematically to buy up the English press of South Africa. They established or obtained control of the *Cape Argus*, the *Cape Times*, the Johannesburg *Star*, the Transvaal *Leader*, the Buluwayo *Chronicle*, the Rhodesia *Herald*, the Kimberley *Advertiser* and the *African Review*. Into these agencies for the manufacture of public opinion they put hundreds of thousands of dollars, and a hostile British witness has declared that they constituted "nothing else than an elaborate factory of misrepresentations for the purpose of stimulating British action." These papers gave the tone to the smaller and less influential English journals of South Africa. These were the offices which the correspondents of the British press frequented, and from these sources the British world received its interpretations of the motives of the Dutch leaders and its impression of the conditions which prevailed in the Transvaal.

Upon the other hand, the Dutch press was

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subsidized and inspired by the corrupt oligarchy at Pretoria, the concession holders who fattened upon the disfranchised miners and mine-holders of Johannesburg, and the greedy Hollanders who plotted and intrigued to establish Dutch supremacy over Natal and the Cape Colony. It was inevitable that under such circumstances the meaner side of every incident, and the darker side of every transaction should be presented alike to Dutch and British, and that suspicion and bad feeling and hatred and passion should infect all the relations between the two populations. The quarrel was fed by charge and counter-charge, by insinuation and misrepresentation, by misunderstanding and misjudgment, by untimely appearances of the ghosts of Slagter's Neck, and by the looming shadows of Majuba Hill.

But to expose and condemn these methods is not to involve the British Government in any deliberate conspiracy to provoke hostilities. It is the fashion to describe Mr. Chamberlain's diplomatic methods as rash and masterful, to suspect his motives and even to pervert his utterances. Perhaps no other public man in the world excites equal rancour and hatred in the breasts of his opponents. But the policy of Mr. Chamberlain was probably informed and guided by Sir Alfred Milner, who when he left Great Britain to assume the post of High Commissioner at the Cape, was universally regarded as a man of moderate counsels, of conciliatory temper, and of singular fitness for maintaining good relations

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between the races in South Africa, and for accomplishing a pacific and satisfactory settlement with the Transvaal authorities. It cannot be that he was transformed at once from a man of peace to a man of blood, and from a pacific negotiator to a quarrelsome despot. It is more likely that he discovered that the relations between President Kruger and the Rand capitalists had become hopelessly estranged, that Kruger's hatred of the capitalists extended to the British Government, and that he was resolved to drive the British out of South Africa in case the Empire should become involved in a quarrel elsewhere. It became therefore the policy of Sir Alfred Milner to force recognition of the rights of the Uitlanders by strenuous negotiation, and by a transfer of political power to the disfranchised citizens of the Transvaal to limit the authority of President Kruger and reform the administration at Pretoria. Mr. Kruger resisted even to the point of war, and as a last desperate expedient invaded and attacked the British colonies. This will probably be the final reading of history and the substantial justification of the British Government.

In the summer of 1899, an agent of the Uitlanders came to Canada, and represented to the Canadian authorities the situation in South Africa. The Government at Ottawa probably also understood that the British Ministry hoped that a display of the moral force of the Empire would induce Mr. Kruger to yield to the demands of Sir Alfred

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Milner and Mr. Chamberlain, and agree to a satisfactory compromise of the grave questions at issue. In any event, on July 31st, 1899, Sir Wilfrid Laurier introduced and Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution declaring that the House viewed with regret the complications which had arisen in the Transvaal Republic, of which Her Majesty is Suzerain, from the refusal to accord to Her Majesty's subjects now settled in that region any adequate participation in its Government; that the House had learned with still greater regret that the condition of things there existing had resulted in intolerable oppression and had produced great and dangerous excitement; and that therefore, "This House, representing a people which has largely succeeded by the adoption of the principle of conceding equal rights to every portion of the population, in harmonizing estrangements and in producing general content with the existing system of Government, desires to express its sympathy with the efforts of Her Majesty's Imperial authorities to obtain for the subjects of Her Majesty who have taken up their abode in the Transvaal such measures of justice and political recognition as may be found necessary to secure them in the full possession of equal rights and liberties."¹

In introducing the resolution the Prime Minister spoke very briefly. He said: "If I be asked: 'What is the reason of this expression of sympathy; what

¹ Hansard, July 31st, 1899, page 8,994.

object would it serve; what result would it effect? I simply answer: 'The object to be sought is that we should extend to our fellow-countrymen in South Africa the right hand of good fellowship, that we should assure them that our heart is with them, and that in our judgment they are in the right; the object would be to assure the Imperial authorities, who have taken in hand the cause of the Uitlanders, that on that question we are at one with them, and that they are also in the right;' and perhaps the effect might be also that this mark of sympathy, extending from continent to continent and encircling the globe might cause wiser and more humane counsels to prevail in the Transvaal, and possibly avert the awful arbitrament of war."¹ The resolution was seconded by the Hon. Geo. E. Foster, and perfunctory and obvious observations were made by Mr. McNeill and Mr. Clarke Wallace. A letter was also read from Sir Charles Tupper, in which he declared we were "bound to give all the aid in our power to Her Majesty's Government in the present crisis." Resolutions to the same effect were adopted by the Senate, where the Hon. David Mills, with that wide information and exceptional mastery of Imperial questions for which he is distinguished, reviewed the situation in South Africa in a compact and instructive address.²

Thus we agreed to sympathetic intervention, and

¹ Hansard, July 31st, 1899, pages 8,992-8,994.

² Senate Debates, August 1st, 1899, pages 1,075-1,082.

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it has been held that by this expression of sympathy and of opinion we were committed also to material aid when war resulted. It is the fact, however, that the object of the resolutions was to promote peace, not to provoke war, and it is just as true that the question of Canadian participation in case war should come was not at all in the mind of Parliament. War was not then seriously expected by the Imperial authorities, and in truth, two days before the Boer ultimatum was issued, a British Minister, then on this side of the Atlantic, insisted that war was out of the question. But the war came, and at once there arose a clamorous agitation for the despatch of Canadian contingents to South Africa. It is not necessary to question the sincerity or the purpose of the journals which led in this movement, but probably concern for the Empire was not wholly separated from concern for the interests of the Conservative party. At any rate they expressed the overwhelming sentiment of the Canadian people, at least in the English-speaking provinces, and there was genuine popular enthusiasm behind the movement. Mr. Tarte, the Minister of Public Works, now appeared, not as resisting the despatch of Canadian contingents, but as opposed to action without the direct authority of Parliament. Mr. Bourassa, a French Canadian Liberal, took the same ground, and even resigned his seat in Parliament as a protest against the final decision of the Government to send contingents without parlia-

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mentary action. The position of Mr. Tarte and Mr. Bourassa provoked violent utterances from the more aggressive wing of the Conservative press, and some of these utterances were interpreted as attacks upon the whole French Canadian population, and indeed would very easily bear that construction. We were setting out to put down a race quarrel in South Africa by making a race quarrel in Canada. Naturally enough these rash and intemperate utterances were resented in Quebec, and probably created feeling against the organization and despatch of contingents.

It was while the controversy was taking this acute and dangerous form that there appeared an interview with Sir Wilfrid Laurier which seemed to question the power of the Government to send contingents without parliamentary sanction. The Premier said: "As I understand the Militia Act—and I may say that I have given it some study of late—our volunteers are enrolled to be used in the defence of the Dominion. They are Canadian troops to be used to fight for Canada's defence. Perhaps the most wide-spread misapprehension is that they cannot be sent out of Canada. To my mind it is clear that occasion might arise when they might be sent to a foreign land to fight. To postulate a case: Suppose that Spain should declare war upon Great Britain. Spain has, or had a navy, and that navy might be got ready to assail Canada as part of the Empire. Sometimes the best method of defending

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one's self is to attack, and in that case Canadian soldiers might certainly be sent to Spain, and it is quite certain that they might legally be so despatched to the Iberian Peninsula." He proceeded to say that the case of the South African Republic was not analogous. "There is no menace to Canada, and although we may be willing to contribute troops, I do not see how we can do so. Then again, how could we do so without Parliament granting us the money. We simply could not do anything. In other words, we should have to summon Parliament. The Government of Canada is restricted in its powers. It is responsible to Parliament, and it can do very little without the permission of Parliament. There is no doubt as to the attitude of the Government on all questions that mean menace to British interests, but in this present case our limitations are very clearly defined. And so it is that we have not offered a Canadian contingent to the Home authorities." He added that while the Militia Department had duly transmitted individual offers to the Imperial Government, the question of furnishing a contingent, for the reasons stated, had not been discussed.¹

This has been held to constitute a refusal by Sir Wilfrid Laurier to send Canadian contingents. But the language will bear no such construction, and was not intended to bear any such construction. It was simply a frank view of the incompetency of

¹ Ottawa despatch to the *Toronto Globe*, October 3rd, 1899.

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the Government to act without parliamentary authority. The charge of inconsistency may lie against the Prime Minister, and even that, as future events will show, rests upon slight ground; but the attempt to show that he declared against the despatch of contingents cannot succeed. Ten days later, in response to an overwhelming public demand, the Government decided to send a contingent and to act without parliamentary sanction. The minute of Council recites that: "The Prime Minister, in view of the well-known desire of a great many Canadians who are ready to take service under such conditions (as prescribed by the Imperial Government), is of opinion that the moderate expenditure which would thus be involved for the equipment and transportation of such volunteers may readily be undertaken by the Government of Canada without summoning Parliament, especially as such an expenditure under such circumstances, cannot be regarded as a departure from the well-known principles of constitutional Government and colonial practice, nor construed as a precedent for future action."

Here again there has been clear misinterpretation of the position of the Government. It has been argued that the Order-in-Council authorizing the equipment of contingents guards against the creation of a precedent for Canadian participation in the wars of the Empire, while, as a matter of fact, the language of the minute guards only against the creation

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of such precedent without the authority of Parliament. Mr. Sanford Evans, in his book on the Canadian contingents, admits that by grammatical construction the Order-in-Council must be so interpreted, but adds: "It is clear on many grounds that the Government considered no principle finally settled by their action, and, therefore, no precedent created upon principle. They met an emergency. The will of the people must prevail; but if new principles of administration are sought, they have yet to be formulated."¹ Now is it not clear that under the present constitution of the Empire no other course is open to a colonial Government? While the colonies have no voice in making the wars of the Empire, could they wisely or properly declare that the precedent of participation in the war in South Africa should constitute a precedent for the action of the colonies in all future conflicts in which the Imperial Government may engage? The colonial Governments, practically debarred from all counsel and from all preparation, ignorant of the Imperial purpose until war is declared, can only decide upon emergency, and it was therefore only necessary, and in truth only possible, for the Canadian Government in the case under consideration to provide that its assumption of military expenditure without parliamentary sanction should not constitute a precedent.

¹ "The Canadian Contingents and Canadian Imperialism," by W. Sanford Evans, page 67.

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The case was well put by Mr. Mills in the Senate, when he said: "We required either the approval of Parliament, or the general sanction of the political sovereignty of this country, from which Parliament derives its existence. There was such an expression of opinion in this country as to justify the Government in the course which they took. We knew well that the Government had no legal authority to propose to send a contingent or propose meeting the expenses of the contingent, otherwise than it felt sure that by a bill of indemnity Parliament would hold it harmless from all expenditure which might be so incurred; and so we adopted a rule which has been adopted in emergencies in England, and that is the constitutional rule of seeking the support of public opinion in anticipation of the approval which will be subsequently given by Parliament."¹ It is hardly necessary to argue that we should not establish any precedent which would vest in the Executive the power to send out Canadian soldiers even to Imperial battle-fields without the authority of Parliament. Great Britain does not make war without the sanction of Parliament and the proper constitutional grant of supplies, and the outlying British dominions cannot afford to be less zealous for the sovereignty of the people in the most vital emergency that can arise in the life of a free community.

Mr. Tarte's position was as sound constitutionally

¹ Senate Debates, February 6th, 1900, page 26.

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as it was destructive politically. The popular temper demanded the immediate organization of contingents, and any one who stopped to consider constitutional methods of procedure, or to emphasize the gravity of the contemplated departure in Canadian policy, was held to be indifferent to the fortunes of the Empire, opposed to the war itself, and hostile, under any circumstances, to Canadian coöperation with British troops in South Africa. Besides, Mr. Tarte was French and belonged to Quebec, and therefore upon the one hand was associated with the intemperate utterances of some of the Quebec journals, and upon the other made the subject of extreme and inflammatory attack by the more rash and intemperate journals and politicians of the English-speaking provinces. The general result was to put the French province on the defensive, and to establish the unfortunate impression that the French people of Quebec were hardly less objectionable to British Imperialists than the Dutch of South Africa. There was friction also over the action and bearing of Imperial officers in Canada, who, unused to official responsibility, and untrained in the methods and maxims of constitutional Government, were full of the idea that they had actual authority over questions of policy, and were animated by a hazy and hesitating impression that the Government of Canada was a sub-department of the Colonial Office, and the soldiers of Canada subject only to Imperial orders. Even under such

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unusual circumstances it was necessary to assert Canadian responsibility and authority, and to check revival in the guise of Imperialism of the meddling and autocratic spirit of Bond Head and Metcalfe. Such friction as existed, due perhaps to inexperience and misunderstanding, rather than to any deliberate desire to make mischief or to usurp the functions of Canadian Ministers, did not extend to the Home Government, nor affect in any measure the good relations between the Canadian Cabinet and British Ministers. There is no ground for the impression that our contribution of troops was due to Imperial coercion, or that Imperial officers in the colonies, who misread their instructions and misunderstood the principles of responsible Government, acted by direct inspiration of the Home Government.

In the meantime it was found that the preparations of the Militia Department for the despatch of Canadian regiments were well advanced, and within only two weeks from the date of the Government's definite determination to send a contingent, the troops embarked at Quebec for the long voyage to the Cape. The organization of the various companies at widely separated points of the country was attended with striking manifestations of popular enthusiasm, and the embarkation at Quebec was significant and memorable for the sympathetic and whole-hearted coöperation of French and English in farewell demonstrations over the departing

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soldiers. Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speech on the occasion was felicitous, moving, eloquent, and nobly expressive of the profound sentiment of attachment to British institutions which the embarking troops represented. The Prime Minister said :

“In wishing you God-speed I pray that God may accompany you, direct you and protect you on the noble mission which you have undertaken. Upon this occasion it is not so much the God of battle as the God of justice whom we invoke. It is inspiring to reflect that the cause for which you men of Canada are going to fight is the cause of justice, the cause of humanity, of civil rights and religious liberty. This war is not a war of conquest or subjugation. It is not to oppress the race whose courage we admire, but it is to put an end to the oppression imposed upon subjects of Her Majesty in South Africa by a tyrannical people. The object is not to crush out the Dutch population, but to establish in that land, of which Her Majesty is Suzerain, British sovereign law, to assure to all men of that country an equal share of liberty. This is an unique occasion in the history of the world; it is a spectacle which ought to make every Canadian feel proud of his country. Who could have believed a few years ago that from this city, which had been the theatre of a bitter conflict between the two proudest races of the world, their descendants, who to-day are a happy and united people, would go forth to help carry the blessings of their own

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institutions to a far distant land? Who could have believed thirty-two years ago that the scattered provinces of British North America would have reached such a point of development to-day that they would be able and willing, and cheerfully willing, to cement with their blood the unity of the Empire in its most distant part? Men of the Canadian contingent, I have no recommendation or request to make to you, but if I had it would simply be to do your duty. More than this we cannot ask; more than this you cannot do. If you do your duty, and I know you will, you take your places side by side with the Dublin Fusiliers, the Gordon Highlanders and the Lancashires, who only last week carried the colours of England to the topmost heights of Glencoe, Dundee, and Eland's Laagte. If you do your duty your proud countrymen will share your glory. Should any one of you unfortunately lose life or limb, your country will feel that you have fully discharged the duty under which you place her this day by this sacrifice to Canada's glory, the glory of the Empire, and, above all, to the cause of justice, humanity, and liberty.¹

A second contingent was sent upon the heels of the first, embracing a large detachment of North-West Mounted Police and there was also added to the contributions from Canada the fine corps, equipped and despatched by Lord Strathcona. Infantry and mounted men alike performed arduous

¹ Speech at Quebec, October 30th, 1899.

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and splendid service throughout the twelve months of their engagement, participated in the long and weary marches from the sea to Johannesburg and Pretoria, faced the fire of the enemy, the disease which lurked in the camp and along the trail, the fatigue and peril of outpost duty, the danger of ambush, the hazard of raid, of sudden encounter, of rash pursuit, with the patience, the steadfastness, the valour, and the endurance of British veterans. It may be that some of the Canadians who volunteered for service in South Africa combined the spirit of adventure with the spirit of patriotism, but whatever their motives, they represented an Imperial temper in the Canadian people, and their gallant behaviour in the field and admirable bearing under all the circumstances of the campaign were of great moral and material benefit to Canada.

It was unfortunate, however, that the war should have come on the eve of a general election in Canada. While our soldiers on South African battle fields maintained the best traditions of the race, at home we traded in Imperialism in order to serve paltry political ends, and nursed racial bigotry for party purposes. The Imperial authorities only required that Canada should equip the Canadian troops and bear the cost of their transportation to Cape Town. Thereafter they took the status of Imperial troops, received Imperial pay and became subject to Imperial regulations. There was some feeling in Canada that we should support our

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contingents in the field as well as meet the charges for equipment and transportation. It was expected when Parliament met for the session of 1900 that the Opposition would offer an amendment to this effect, and failing acceptance of the proposition, force the Administration into direct antagonism with the flowing tide of Imperial sentiment. But the motion was not forthcoming, and it soon began to appear that other influences had entered into the counsels of the Opposition. A few weeks later Sir Charles Tupper made a speech at Quebec, which, while not inconsistent with his historical attitude, was in remarkable contrast to his strenuous advocacy of the despatch of contingents. He attacked Sir Wilfrid Laurier for giving a tariff preference to Great Britain without exacting preferential treatment of Canadian products in the British market, and represented the Liberal leader as an advocate of Imperial federation under which Canada would be required to contribute \$46,000,000 a year for Imperial defence. He recalled the fact that he was mainly instrumental in breaking up the old Imperial Federation League, which stood for colonial contributions to the support of the British army and navy, and warned those whom he addressed against any policy which would make Canada responsible for any regular contribution to the permanent military defences of the Empire.¹

This was perhaps sound enough, and at least

¹ Speech at the Garrison Club of Quebec, March 31st, 1900.

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it was a fair statement of the policy of the Conservative party under Sir John Macdonald, and quite consistent with all his own past utterances.¹ He had always contended that in constructing canals and railways, and in subsidizing steamships for commercial purposes, Canada was doing her fair share for the support of the defences of the Empire, and should not be called upon for direct contributions to the British army and navy. This view will be found in many of his speeches and in many of his contributions to periodical literature. In 1893 he wrote a self-congratulatory letter over a cautious report by the executive committee of the Imperial Federation League in favour of a preferential tariff. The committee of the League said: "The sense of the permanence of the political union would naturally induce the people of the various countries in the Empire to make, for the sake of strengthening

¹ In 1885, during the war in the Soudan, New South Wales offered the Imperial Government a body of troops. This induced Lord Hartington, the Secretary for War, to put himself into communication with the other colonies. The Canadian Government, however, replied to the intimation that colonial aid would be received by offering to sanction recruiting in Canada for service in Egypt or elsewhere, but stipulated that the entire cost must fall on the Imperial Exchequer. The War Office in reply to Canada said: "The offer of the Government of New South Wales, which has been accepted by Her Majesty's Government, was to provide an organized force, fully equipped and ready for immediate service, and the Government of the Dominion will no doubt fully appreciate the difference between the two offers as regards the use which could be made of them by Her Majesty's Government, and will not, Lord Hartington feels sure, consider that in declining their patriotic offer for the present any undue preference has been given to the colony of New South Wales."

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the union, fiscal arrangements which under existing circumstances they are not prepared to adopt." In comment thereon Sir Charles Tupper observed: "Knowing as I do, that the most active members of the Imperial Federation League were mainly intent on levying a large contribution on the revenues of the colonies for the support of the army and navy of Great Britain, I am delighted to have been able, almost single-handed, to obtain such a report from such a committee. Unfortunately, they captured Mr. Parkin, and having used him here, are now using him in Canada to create the false impression that we do nothing to maintain the defence of the Empire, instead of showing, as he truthfully could, that we have entitled ourselves to the gratitude of every man who has the interest of the Empire at heart."¹

This is a position which can be strongly supported. It is, as has been said, the view which Sir Charles Tupper had always entertained. It is known also that Sir John Macdonald was resolutely opposed to the participation of Canada in the wars of the Empire. But while the Conservative press and the Conservative politicians in the English provinces were denouncing Sir Wilfrid Laurier as recreant to the interests of the Empire, and timid and faint-hearted in his proffer of aid to Imperial arms in South Africa,

¹ Letter from Sir Charles Tupper read at the annual meeting of the Canadian Branch of the Imperial Federation League, at Montreal, February 19th, 1893.

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it was surely a strange proceeding for the leader of the Opposition to go down to Quebec and attack the Prime Minister for seeking to involve Canada in an annual expenditure of millions for the defence of Imperial interests. Sir Charles Tupper also declared at Montreal that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was too English for him, with his programme of Imperial federation, and the plain purpose was to rouse against the Liberal leader such prejudice as existed in Quebec against the despatch of the contingents and the Government's general support of the British cause in South Africa.¹

One of the Conservative campaign documents, intended for use in the French constituencies only, said that Sir Wilfrid Laurier, during the Jubilee year, had committed the fatal mistake of giving vent to words that were binding us to the war destinies of Great Britain, and that he had advocated Imperial federation, while Sir Charles Tupper had opposed that project. A Conservative candidate made a bitter attack on the Government for sending troops to aid Great Britain in what he described as an unjust war, a war entered on from the basest motives, for robbery, plunder, and rapine. *Trifluvien*, the Conservative journal at Three Rivers, said that in order to gain British honours Sir Wilfrid Laurier had "sacrificed the sweat of our

¹ "As far as Sir Wilfrid Laurier is concerned, you can say that he is too English for me with his programme of Imperial federation."—Sir Charles Tupper in an interview in *La Presse*, Montreal, August 20th, 1900.

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workmen, the backbone of our industries, even the blood of our children." An influential Conservative member of the Quebec Legislature said that "the Bordens, the Chamberlains, and the Huttons" were dragging Canada into participation in the wars of the Empire. *Le Monde Canadien*, a Conservative journal, said that the Conservative policy was "Canada for the Canadians," while Sir Wilfred Laurier's "British to the core" was a word of surrender. *L'Événement*, also a Conservative journal, asked whether it was necessary to espouse all the quarrels of England, just or unjust, furnish targets for her enemies' guns, applaud her damnable acts and proclaim a victory when her army suffers defeat.

In Ontario a very different spirit informed and dominated the Conservative campaign. Here, however, the attack was upon Mr. Tarte rather than upon Sir Wilfred Laurier. Mr. Tarte's contention that troops should not be sent to South Africa without parliamentary authority was remembered and held to constitute opposition to aid for Great Britain in any event. The utterances of *La Patrie*, edited by the sons of the Minister, were persistently represented to be his personal opinions, and these were not always acceptable in the English provinces. But the speeches of Mr. Tarte at Paris, where he represented Canada at the Exposition, constituted the grand bill of indictment. Mr. Tarte has denied that the speeches were accurately reported, but he has never furnished any explicit or

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detailed correction of these utterances. In one of his addresses at Paris he was declared to have said: "Canada has not sent any troops against the Transvaal. She has merely authorized the enrolment of volunteers destined for the expedition. Canada has dressed those volunteers and transported them. This is a very different matter." And again: "Allow me to say so and allow me to repeat it, we have remained French; we are more and more so; we are more French than we were twenty years ago, and more than we were a year ago." He was also reported to have said: "I will say, as I have often said before, that I am French, that I was never anything but French, and that I will always be French," and, "I will not venture to prophecy concerning the future of Canada, but it may be supposed that in ten or twenty years, when the population shall have grown to as many millions, England may find it embarrassing to keep such a heavy child in her lap, and as the French Canadians increase numerically much faster than their compatriots of different origin, there is room for hope that a great and glorious destiny still awaits us."

This was rare material for a party conflict, and it was used with deadly effect in the English constituencies. On the other hand, the more extreme utterances of Conservative papers and Conservative speakers in the English provinces were put into French, and circulated in behalf of the ministerial candidates in Quebec. Nor can this be described as

other than a legitimate defensive measure, or at least a natural retaliation, in view of the attempt to destroy the Government there on account of its contribution of Canadian regiments to the Imperial service. There are few more humiliating and deplorable chapters in our history than this, and few more depressing illustrations of the extent to which racial feeling can be exploited to the destruction of the sense of national unity in the Canadian people. It seemed for the moment that racialism was the main birth of Imperialism, and that in dedicating some of the best blood of Canada to the cause of Imperial unity over seas we had produced only dissension and disunion at home. Mr. Tarte vehemently protested against the interpretation put upon his Paris speeches, but explanations seldom carry far in the heat of a political campaign, and the Paris reports were too useful to his opponents to be sacrificed to any protest or to any explanation that the Minister could offer. In one of his speeches during the campaign, Mr. Tarte said:

“They say that I am disloyal, but they do not prove it. I defy them to prove it, for I am not disloyal, never was and never will be. My opponents have published a pamphlet, full of lies, purporting to be reports of various disloyal speeches made by me while in France. They are most unblushing falsehoods. The Canadian public man who would go to a foreign country, who would utter disloyal words, would be a traitor. That man

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is not myself. The traitors to Her Majesty Queen Victoria and to the British flag which floats over us and grants us all our liberties are those who try to set the various races in this country against one another. . . . I was born under the Union Jack—yes, and I live under it, and enjoy and appreciate the liberties it represents. I am a loyal subject of Her Majesty the Queen. I deserve no special credit for that. Why should we not be loyal? Are we not happy? I have just returned from Paris, where I had the opportunity of studying at close range some forty-two different nations and their forms of government. And I found that no form of government was so satisfactory as ours; that no people were so free, and had so much reason to be happy and contented as have we in this Canada of ours. . . . My traducers say that I tried to sell this country to France, and that if I did not deliver the goods it was not my fault. Just as if I and the French Canadians were so lost to a sense of honour and all sense of self-interest as to wish to transfer our allegiance from Britain to France. Where is the fool in my race who would for a moment wish to be ruled by France, and under the systems which prevail in France? We are French Canadians, but we are British subjects; yes, loyal and devoted subjects of Her beloved Majesty, Queen Victoria.”¹

This doubtless represented Mr. Tarte's real opinions and expressed the dominant sentiment of the

¹ Mr. Tarte at Windsor Hall, Montreal, October 22nd, 1900.

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Province of Quebec. But nothing could avail to check the fervour of protest and the fury of indignation which his opponents had set going. "Only one flag for Canada," they cried. We must maintain Canada as "a British country" they declared. "Shall Tarte rule?" they asked. "Let us vote," they pleaded, "against absolutism, boodlism, racialism, disloyalty, and Tarte." It is not pretended that this was the only issue in the contest, but it was unquestionably its chief and outstanding feature in many constituencies. It is remarkable, however, that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was received everywhere with unusual marks of affection and respect, and even in Toronto, where his candidates met a signal defeat, his visit created extraordinary interest and enthusiasm. He was frank and straightforward as to all his dealings with the contingents, boldly admitted that the Government had considered and hesitated, and deliberately argued that in face of such a momentous step no other attitude would have become the Administration. For example, in Toronto, the very seat and centre of Imperial feeling, he said:

"I am here as I have been in the Province of Quebec, to speak the same things to vindicate my course. I am free to say that I was not over hasty in sending the contingent. Sir Charles Tupper, when he addressed the people of Toronto here, from this very platform, made it a cause of reproach to me that I did not rush forward for the

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sending of the contingent, that I had told an interviewer that to do so would be unconstitutional and irregular. I have not a word to retract from what I said then. Sir Charles Tupper may rush, perhaps plunge his hands into the public treasury and take \$2,000,000, but I must say when I have no parliamentary authority to take money from the public treasury I shall always hesitate and be slow. We had no authority from Parliament to send a contingent to South Africa. We had no authority to take money to provide for the expenditure, and I want to know, my fellow-countrymen, are you prepared to blame a man occupying the position I do if he hesitates before taking money without the authority of Parliament from the public treasury? Under parliamentary government I ask if it would be possible or desirable for one single instant that the Government of the day of their own free pleasure, however worthy the cause, should have authority to take money from the public treasury and expend it at their own will. Sir, we had no authority at that time, and, as I said at the outset, I cannot be blamed for not doing what we had no authority for, and the only justification we could have was the mandate from the people which was expressed in no unmistakable manner. That was my authority. I say more because I have nothing to disguise upon this question. I had hoped to the last that there would be no war. I hoped to the last that the Uitlanders would get their rights

from Mr. Kruger's Government, not by the use of force, but simply by the means of reason applied to the case. I hoped to the last that the bonds of union which in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries had existed between Britain and Holland would still be remembered. I hoped to the last that those great principles of freedom which Holland and England held in common against the continent of Europe would be remembered, and would have their effect in the settlement of the Uitlanders' rights. Well, I go one step further and meet my opponents on every point. I will not hesitate to do so. There is a French proverb among the people of Quebec. I am one of them and I know the feeling of my countrymen. The proverb I speak of is 'Blood is thicker than water,' and the issue may not appeal to my fellow-countrymen of French origin as it appealed to you. Still we are British subjects, and claim the rights of British subjects, and we assume all the responsibilities this entails. There are men foolish enough, there are men unpatriotic enough to blame us and to say that I should have rushed on and taken no precautions to guide public opinion in my own province. That is not my way of governing the country. That is not my way of settling a difficulty. I told you a moment ago that I would not swim with the current, I would endeavour to guide the current, and on that occasion I tried to do so. But a moment came in this question when President Kruger sent

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his insolent ultimatum, and there was a wave of indignation passing over all the British Empire, and then I said there is no longer any hesitation, we must act, and we did act on October 14th; and within three weeks our boys were on the ocean. Nor is that all. I told you a moment ago that I am of French origin. May I not be pardoned if I remember that among those boys who sailed from Quebec on October 31st there were boys of my own blood, There were boys of my own blood who in South Africa showed that the blood of the great nation that is in their veins has not degenerated. They fought for the Queen with the same valour as their ancestors had fought for the King of France, and we have cemented upon the soil of South Africa the unity of the Canadian nation."

He went on to say that like Sir John Macdonald he had discovered that Canada was a hard country to govern. It was necessary to take the course which could be adopted by all the men whose fortune it was to be upon the soil of Canada, and he charged that Sir Charles Tupper did not apply himself to settle difficulties, but sought to gain power by arraying section against section. He quoted the statement of the Opposition leader at Montreal that Sir Wilfrid Laurier was too English for him, and his subsequent repudiation of the statement at Toronto, in the assertion that the Premier was not half English or Imperial enough. "Am I to be denounced," Sir Wilfrid asked, "in my

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own province to those who are of my own blood and creed and race as being too English, and am I to be denounced among you, gentlemen, as not being English enough?"

He proceeded: "I am of French origin, and I tell Sir Charles Tupper and his followers that neither I nor my fellow-countrymen will be Uitlandered in the land of our birth. I am of French origin, but I have said again and again, and I need not repeat it to you, that I am a British subject. I claim all the rights of a British subject; I assume all the duties of a British subject as well. This is the policy I intend to maintain, this is the policy I have followed in Quebec, this is the policy which I have tried to inculcate among my fellow-countrymen of the same race as I am myself. If we are to become a nation, we must once and for all cease these appeals to creed and race. We must fight upon lines which appeal to all races, to all creeds, and which appeal to all Canadians. Have we not been separated long enough? And has the time not come when a man can say: 'I am a Canadian, first, last, and all the time?'" Addressing the young men in the galleries, he said: "It is to them that I wish to appeal in this contest, while we are in the throes of a general election, and although they may not, perhaps, all have the right to vote, let them remember this, though we may be separated by race and language, by our antecedents, by tradition, let me assure them that whether in Quebec, in Ontario,

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or in Manitoba, there are chords in the human heart which can be tuned by the same key, the key of pure and lofty patriotism." Turning to the motto over the platform, he read out the words: "Union, Peace, Friendship, and Fraternity," and he said: "I used those words at Montreal, amongst my fellow-countrymen of my own race; I use them again among my fellow-countrymen of Ontario. The words are not mine. They are the words of Lafontaine, addressed to the Reformers of Upper Canada in 1841. The times are different, the cause is still the same, and the battle has to be once more won."¹ The speech moved the great meeting profoundly. Many times the orator's course was checked by sympathetic and prolonged cheering. Notwithstanding all the clamour of the hour, and all the passion and prejudice which the contest evoked, it is still true that the appeal found its enduring echo in the deep-seated sentiment of a very great body of the citizens of Ontario.

One other incident in this remarkable chapter in Canadian history cannot be overlooked, for it fills out Sir Wilfrid Laurier's conception of the Imperial relationship, and of the duty Canada owes to the Empire in days of stress and storm. During the session of Parliament preceding the election, Mr. Bourassa, who had broken with the Government over its South African policy, moved and supported with an exhaustive speech a resolution affirming

¹ Sir Wilfrid Laurier at Toronto, October 16th, 1900.

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the principle of the sovereignty and the independence of Parliament as the basis of British institutions and the safeguard of the civil and political liberties of British citizens; asking that the action of the Government in relation to the South African war should not be considered as a precedent which should commit Canada to any action in the future; and declaring that any change in the political and military relations which exist at present between Canada and Great Britain should be opposed unless such change was initiated by the sovereign will of Parliament and sanctioned by the people of Canada.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, when he came to discuss the subject, said that he found no particular fault with the principles enunciated in the amendment, but he challenged altogether the opportuneness or the necessity for its introduction. He met the argument of Mr. Bourassa that in appropriating money for the contingents without the sanction of Parliament, the Government had violated the principles of the British Constitution, by quoting precedents from British history. Among these were the purchase of Blaca's collections of coins and antiquities for the British museum, and Disraeli's purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal, and the action of Pitt, as thus described by Todd: "At the commencement of the French revolutionary war, Mr. Pitt advanced enormous sums, amounting to upwards of £1,200,000, to the Emperor of Germany, to aid in the defence of the general interests in

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Europe, without the previous sanction of Parliament. Upon the attention of the House of Commons being directed to this affair it was proposed to pass a vote of censure on the Minister, but his friends interposed, and induced the House to agree to an amendment, declaring that the proceeding in question, though not to be drawn into precedent but upon occasion of special necessity, was, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, a justifiable and proper exercise of the discretion vested in His Majesty's Ministers by a former vote of credit."

Sir Wilfrid Laurier then pointed out that "there were British Liberals in those days, just as there are to-day in this Parliament also. There were Liberals who had not only the label on their breasts and the badge on their necks, but the principles in their hearts, just as much as any Liberals have them to-day. There was Fox in the time of Pitt, and Gladstone and Bright in the time of Disraeli, and there the authority of Parliament was sanctioned by those Liberals, who held that Parliament could sanction the expenditure of money in certain emergencies." He denied that it was a weak thing to be guided by public opinion in sending troops to South Africa, and said :

"What would be the condition of this country to-day if we had refused to obey the voice of public opinion? If we had refused at that time to do what was, in my judgment, our imperative duty, it is only too true that a most dangerous

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agitation would have arisen—an agitation which, according to all human probability, would have ended in a line of cleavage upon racial lines. A greater calamity could never take place in Canada. My honourable friend and I have long been on terms of intimacy. He has long been a political friend and supporter of mine. He knows as well as any man in this House knows, that if there is one thing to which I have given my political life it is to try to promote unity and harmony and amity between the diverse elements of this country. My friends can desert me, they can withdraw their confidence from me, they can withdraw the trust which they have placed in my hands, but never shall I deviate from that line of policy. Whatever may be the consequences, whether loss of prestige, loss of popularity, or loss of power, I feel that I am in the right, and I know that a time will come when every man, my honourable friend himself included, will render me full justice in that respect."

He made an eloquent defence of the justice of the British cause in South Africa, and a spirited denial of the charge that the hand of Canada had been forced by the British authorities. "No," he said, "we were not forced by England, we were not forced by Mr. Chamberlain or by Downing street, to do what we did, and I cannot conceive what my honourable friend meant when he said that the future of this country was not to be pledged by this Government. When and where did we pledge

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the future of this country? We acted in the full independence of our sovereign power. What we did we did of our own free will, but I am not to answer for the consequences or for what will take place in the future. My honourable friend says that the consequence is that we will be called on to take part in other wars. I have only this to answer to my honourable friend, that if it should be the will of the people of Canada, at any future stage, to take part in any war of England, the people of Canada will have to have their way. Let me say to my honourable friend further, the maxim which he has advocated this afternoon and which he took from the despatch of Lord Grey to Lord Elgin, 'It must be remembered that the government of the British Colonies in North America cannot be carried on in opposition to the will of the people,' was the language in 1847, it holds good in 1900, and will be the language used so long as we have free parliamentary institutions in Canada. But I have no hesitation in saying to my honourable friend that if as a consequence of our action to-day the doctrine were to be admitted that Canada should take part in all the wars of Great Britain and contribute to the military expenditure of the Empire, I will agree with him that we should revise the conditions of things existing between us and Great Britain. If we were to be compelled to take part in all the wars of Britain, I have no hesitation in saying that I agree with my honourable friend

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that, sharing the burden, we should also share the responsibility. Under that condition of things, which does not exist, we should have the right to say to Great Britain, 'If you want us to help you, you must call us to your councils; if you want us to take part in wars let us share not only the burdens but the responsibilities as well.' But there is no occasion to say that to-day."

He pointed out that the Government had called for volunteers, but had compelled no man to go to South Africa. It had simply provided the machinery and expenses to enable these volunteers to offer their lives for the honour of their country and the flag they loved. He continued:

"Shall the sacrifice be all on the one side and none on the other, the obligation all on the one side and none on the other? We were not compelled to do what we did, but if we chose to be generous, to do a little more than we were bound to do, where is a man living who would find fault with us for that action? He dreads the consequences of this action in sending out a military contingent to South Africa. Let me tell him from the bottom of my heart that my heart is full of the hopes I entertain of the beneficial results which will accrue from that action. When our young volunteers sailed from our shores to join the British army in South Africa, great were our expectations that they would display on those distant battlefields the same courage which had been displayed by their fathers when

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fighting against one another in the last century. Again, in many breasts there was a fugitive sense of uneasiness at the thought that the first facing of musketry and cannon by raw recruits is always a severe trial. But when the telegraph brought us the news that such was the good impression made by our volunteers that the Commander-in-Chief had placed them in the post of honour, in the first rank, to share the danger with that famous corps, the Gordon Highlanders; when we heard that they had justified fully the confidence placed in them, that they had charged like veterans, that their conduct was heroic and had won for them the encomiums of the Commander-in-Chief and the unstinted admiration of their comrades, who had faced death upon a hundred battlefields in all parts of the world, is there a man whose bosom did not swell with pride, that noblest of all pride, that pride of pure patriotism, the pride of the consciousness of our rising strength, the pride of the consciousness that on that day it had been revealed to the world that a new power had arisen in the West? Nor is that all. The work of union and harmony between the chief races of this country is not yet complete. We know by the unfortunate occurrences that took place only last week that there is much to do in that way. But there is no bond of union so strong as the bond created by common dangers faced in common. To-day there are men in South Africa representing the two branches of the

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Canadian family fighting side by side for the honour of Canada. Already some of them have fallen, giving to the country the last full measure of devotion. Their remains have been laid in the same grave, there to remain to the end of time in that last fraternal embrace. Can we not hope, I ask my honourable friend himself, that in that grave shall be buried the last vestiges of our former antagonism? If such shall be the result, if we can indulge that hope, if we can believe that in that grave shall be buried contentions, the sending of the contingents would be the greatest service ever rendered Canada since Confederation.”¹

This speech had an extraordinary effect upon Parliament. It was cheered tumultuously by members on both sides, and the crowded galleries set decorum at defiance, and joined with uncontrollable enthusiasm in the demonstration below. It touched the heart of Canada and in Great Britain was received with unaffected praise and gratitude, praise for its power and beauty and finish, gratitude for its splendid vindication of the British cause, and splendid utterance of the love and devotion of the Canadian people to the embattled Empire. It stands as the most eloquent and impressive speech which the war has evoked.

¹ Hansard, March 13th, 1900, pages 1,837-1,847.

Dr. Geo. R. Parkin, C.M.G., speaking to the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society of Toronto, pronounced this the noblest speech ever delivered by a colonial Minister.

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All this was said and all these events occurred before November 7th, 1900, when the people of Canada declared their judgment upon the first Administration of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The historian of the future will marvel greatly at some of the results of the polling. If he shall look through the musty, worm-eaten files of the chief journals of the time he will find that the contest turned largely upon the first despatch of Canadian troops to serve in a British war overseas. He will find that these soldiers were sent by a Government at whose head was a French Canadian. He will find that the French Province of Quebec was represented as hostile to the war, seething with disloyalty, and honeycombed with sympathy for Britain's enemies. He will find that the English Province of Ontario was aflame with loyal enthusiasm and royally proud of the contribution of troops to the cause of the Imperial mother. He will find that the Government which equipped and despatched the soldiers of Canada to South Africa, carried fifty-eight out of the sixty-five seats in the disloyal Province of Quebec, and thirty-four out of the ninety-two seats in the loyal Province of Ontario. And he shall surely feel that if he write faithfully the story of these records there will be pronounced upon his work the judgment of that man who said, "I believe everything but history; history is a lie."

If he shall look further he will find that there was a hearty Canadian feeling, but a less intense

British feeling in the Province of Quebec, than prevailed in the other provinces ; that there were in Quebec a few vagrant visionaries, bred and reared in old France, who dreamed of a new French power on the banks of the St. Lawrence, and were esteemed by their fellow-countrymen much as the Scottish people regard some lonely and forsaken Jacobite who lives far back in centuries past and gone, and looks still with yearning eyes for the restoration of the Stuart dynasty ; that there was in Quebec a sentimental attachment to old France, and the tri-color, but beyond and before all, a deep contentment with British institutions, and a cordial recognition of all the essential duties and responsibilities of British citizenship. If he shall look still further he will find that while there were occasional expressions of sympathy with Britain's enemies, and among public journals and isolated political groups in the Province of Quebec a disposition to question the justice of the war in South Africa, and the spirit and motives of the Imperial Government, still there were in the British Islands vastly harsher criticism and far more general attack upon British Ministers, a sterner arraignment of the policy and justice of the war, more direct, open, and positive sympathy with the Dutch Burghers, more general, irreconcilable, and irrepressible revolt against the whole method and purpose of Imperial policy. If he shall probe yet deeper for the roots of the problem he may find perchance among the age-worn volumes

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in some old library a Report on the Affairs of British North America, written well back in the first half of the nineteenth century, by one Lord Durham, sometime Governor-General of the Canadas, and shall read therein:—"The difference of language produces misconceptions yet more fatal even than these which it occasions with respect to opinions; it aggravates the national animosities by representing all the events of the day in utterly different lights. The political misrepresentation of facts is one of the incidents of a free press in every free country; but in nations in which all speak the same language, those who receive a misrepresentation from one side, have generally some means of learning the truth from the other. In Lower Canada, however, where the French and English papers represent adverse opinions, and where no large portion of the community can read both languages with ease, those who receive the misrepresentation are rarely able to avail themselves of the means of correction. It is difficult to perceive the perversity with which misrepresentations are habitually made, and the gross delusions which find currency among the people; they thus live in a world of misconceptions, in which each party is set against the other not only by diversity of feelings and opinions, but by an actual belief in an utterly different set of facts."¹

¹ Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America, London, 1839, page 25.

CHAPTER XXVIII

TEN YEARS OF OFFICE

FOR fifteen years Sir Wilfrid Laurier was Prime Minister of Canada. In length of service he was exceeded only by Sir John Macdonald. He had a longer period of continuous service than had even the Conservative leader. For thirteen years, from 1878 to 1891, Sir John Macdonald was first minister. For fifteen years, from 1896 to 1911, Sir Wilfrid was leader of the House of Commons and head of the administration. Each had the confidence of the country through four successive general elections. In personal distinction and in genius for popular and parliamentary leadership they are the outstanding figures in the history of the Canadian Confederation. In method and in policy the one greatly resembled the other. In personal characteristics they were unlike but as they grew older there was a striking physical resemblance. Both loved power and place and each could adapt himself to changing circumstances and conditions without excessive regard for consistency or the letter of the law in profession or in practice. This, however, is only to admit that governing statesmen must take account of public opinion and that what is wise

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and possible to-day may be unwise or at least impracticable to-morrow. Both Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir John Macdonald had fundamental convictions, and to these they were not unfaithful in the vital tests which men cannot escape who for any long period bear upon their shoulders the burdens and responsibilities of government.

Between 1900 and 1911 four or five capital issues engaged the attention of the country. In order of time there was the contract for the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, then the bills to establish two new provinces in the western territories, later the decision to create a Canadian navy and finally the trade agreement with Washington. There were, no doubt, many minor questions dividing parliament and disturbing the constituencies but these were the peaks in that range of Canadian history. The origin of the proposal to extend the Grand Trunk Railway system across Western Canada has never been fully disclosed. It was at first suggested that Hon. George A. Cox, president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, a member of the senate, with extensive and influential financial connections, got the ear of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and substantially determined the policy of the government. The truth is, however, that owing to the long attack to which Mr. Cox was subjected over the Crow's Nest Pass Railway he had come to exercise less power at Ottawa and had lost something of his

GRAND TRUNK PACIFIC

influence with the prime minister. But by the Conservative leaders and the press of the Opposition he was regarded as vulnerable and therefore his connection with the new transcontinental railway project was magnified for political purposes. There is reason to think that the advances to Sir Wilfrid Laurier were made by Charles M. Hays, then president of the Grand Trunk Railway, and not through any indirect channel. No doubt Mr. Hays sought outside political support and desired to associate financial leaders in Toronto and elsewhere with the Grand Trunk group in Montreal and in England. It is certain, however, that Mr. Hays' proposal had an immediate attraction for Sir Wilfrid. He was easily persuaded that the pioneer Canadian railway should have direct and independent connection with the prairies and the Pacific. There was an abounding optimism in the country, immigrants under the able, skillful and energetic direction of Hon. Clifford Sifton were coming by tens of thousands, trade was expanding, financial and commercial leaders were courageous and confident, and a second transcontinental railway was commonly treated as an actual if not an immediate national necessity.

It is true that the Canadian Northern had a western system extending from Port Arthur to Edmonton, with disconnected branches in the older provinces, but Sir Wilfrid believed that once parliament had ratified the Grand Trunk Pacific

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contract the adventurous builders of the Canadian Northern would be obliged to bargain with Mr. Hays for the purchase of their western lines and practically be compelled to abandon their effort to reach the Pacific and build along Lake Superior. It is not suggested that Sir Wilfrid intended to apply parliamentary or governmental coercion. He held out no threat to William Mackenzie and Donald A. Mann nor had he any understanding with Mr. Hays and his associates that pressure would be applied to the promoters of the Canadian Northern. He believed, however, that Mackenzie and Mann would be unable to proceed and that the hard logic of the situation would compel an accommodation between Grand Trunk and Canadian Northern interests. But Mackenzie and Mann had set themselves with resolute purpose to create a transcontinental railway and were not amenable to persuasion or argument. They had displayed remarkable skill and resource in dealing with legislatures and parliament. They had extracted substantial subsidies and guarantees from provincial governments. William Mackenzie seldom came back empty-handed from the English money market. Donald A. Mann had a genius for lobbying such as few men have possessed. They were practical railway builders, and it has been demonstrated that they had singularly accurate knowledge of the western country and planned to build through the most fertile and productive western

A GREAT DREAM

areas. Moreover, whatever judgment may be pronounced upon the methods which they employed, Mackenzie and Mann were animated by sound national considerations. They were under the spell of a great dream in which there was less of greed of gain and less of vulgar personal ambition than their detractors have ever admitted. If they had achieved the goal of their long and resolute endeavor they would have been honored by posterity as are other builders of empire, not more scrupulous, not less defamed, who succeeded, as Mackenzie and Mann did not, in the great enterprises to which they set their hands.

Mackenzie and Mann persuaded themselves that they could prevent parliamentary ratification of the Grand Trunk Pacific contract. No such thought should have been entertained. They had exercised a degree of control over many legislatures and they had reason to think that they were influential in many constituencies. But it is one thing to secure subsidies from a legislature when a government is willing that subsidies shall be granted and a very different thing to divide and control a parliamentary majority which owes its first allegiance to a prime minister and a cabinet who resist the effort of the lobby. Moreover, in 1903 Sir Wilfrid Laurier was at the peak of his strength in the House of Commons and commanded a devoted and united party in the constituencies. No doubt Mackenzie and Mann

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had knowledge that the project to which the prime minister had committed himself so unreservedly and with so much zeal and enthusiasm was not regarded favorably by some of his ministers. Mr. Blair, the minister of railways, was definitely opposed to the contract while Mr. Sifton regarded the whole enterprise as premature, ill conceived, immature in design and of dubious national advantage. In his view the proper policy was to assist the Grand Trunk to build to Port Arthur and the Canadian Northern to reach the Pacific, link the sections under a permanent traffic agreement and thus have two instead of three transcontinental systems. Finally, however, he submitted to the majority of the cabinet and gave loyal support to the project in parliament and in the constituencies. As effective as Mr. Sifton in settling the details of the contract and defending its provisions in parliament and in the country was Sir William Mulock, then postmaster-general, and now chief justice of Ontario. Mr. Blair, however, was contumacious and unyielding. Aside altogether from his disbelief in the project he felt that he had been treated with discourtesy and neglect. He was substantially ignored by Sir Wilfrid in the negotiations with the Grand Trunk. Nor was that the first time the leader of the government had shown want of confidence in the minister of railways. The estrangement began in 1897 and never afterward was there a happy

THE GRAND TRUNK ROUTE

working relation between the two. The name of Blair had come to carry a flavor of intrigue and corruption. He was the object of bitter and continuous attack by his opponents and it may be they succeeded in investing the minister with evil qualities which he did not possess. In the man there was much that was attractive. In all private and domestic relations he was without reproach. That he was able and vigorous is beyond dispute. It is true also that for most of the things that were spoken or whispered to his discredit no evidence of justification has ever been produced. But it is certain that he was distrusted by the prime minister, and if his withdrawal from the cabinet was not actually desired there at least was no regret when his resignation was offered.

For the Grand Trunk Pacific contract the leader of the government was chiefly and peculiarly responsible. He it was who began the negotiations with Mr. Hays, who imposed the project upon the cabinet, and who placed it before parliament in a speech which was below his level in power of statement and consistency of argument. It is no secret that the route chosen for the new trans-continental railway was accepted by the Grand Trunk under pressure and protest. Mr. Hays desired to go by North Bay, across the clay belt of northwestern Ontario, through to Winnipeg and on to the Pacific. But the government was embarrassed by sectional and political consider-

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ations, by the natural desire of Sir Wilfrid to interest Quebec and by the demand of the Maritime Liberal delegation in parliament for a direct connection with the Canadian ports on the Atlantic. Moreover, the central feature of the enterprise as conceived by Sir Wilfrid was a main section from Quebec to Port Arthur, across northern Quebec and northwestern Ontario to Winnipeg and thence through Edmonton to the Pacific. The final agreement provided that the eastern terminus should be Moncton in New Brunswick, that the western section, outward from Winnipeg, should be built by the Grand Trunk Pacific Company, created for the purpose, and that the National transcontinental section, from Moncton to Winnipeg, should be constructed by the government. Towards the construction of the Pacific section a liberal bond guarantee was provided while the transcontinental section to be built by the government under the direction of a commission was to be leased to the new company at an annual rental equivalent to three per cent of the cost of construction. If it seems curious that Moncton was selected as the eastern terminus it has only to be remembered that it would have been politically difficult, if not actually impossible, for the government to choose between St. John and Halifax. There were later alterations and modifications of the contract but substantially these were the conditions under which the new

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transcontinental system was constructed at a cost materially in excess of the estimates.

The Conservative Opposition under R. L. Borden was infertile and unhappy in the endeavor to discover an alternative policy. Ultimately the party was committed to construction by government but there was so much of incoherence and uncertainty in its manœuvres that the country was not impressed. In some of its phases, however, the attack of the Opposition was destructive enough. It was difficult for the government to justify the eastern section which paralleled the Intercolonial Railway and not easy to defend the guarantee of seventy-five per cent of the cost of building a railway which would belong to a private company. It was alleged that the guarantee of credit would involve no actual charge upon the country and that the transcontinental section would be a national asset. This confidence was not to be justified by events, but in those days of exuberant optimism there was faith enough to believe that no heavy obligation would ever fall upon the public treasury. Sir Wilfrid argued that the route of the Intercolonial was determined by military rather than by commercial considerations; that the new road would be a hundred miles shorter and from thirty to seventy miles distant with a mountain range between the old and the new; that the Canadian Pacific "short line" through the State of Maine to St. John could be

made inoperative and ineffective if the United States should ever abrogate the bonding privilege; that in the interest of national safety a commercial route wholly within Canadian territory and connecting with Canadian seaports must be secured; that the total cost would not exceed seven years' interest on the cost of the mountain section and seven years' rental on the eastern section or a total of \$13,000,000; that a railway operated by the government could not develop subsidiary enterprises nor establish and maintain satisfactory connections with shippers in foreign countries. "I am well aware," he declared, "that this plan may scare the timid and frighten the irresolute but I may claim that every man who has in his bosom a stout Canadian heart will welcome it as worthy of this young nation, for which a heavy task has no terrors, which has the strength to face grave duties and grave responsibilities."¹

Before the resolution for construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific was submitted to parliament Mr. Blair resigned the office of minister of railways. In the letter of resignation he complained that the prime minister had received proposals from the Grand Trunk, that he had consulted with other ministers, and that these other ministers had met Mr. Hays on various occasions with his knowledge and approval "long before you made me aware that negotiations or discussions on this

¹ Hansard, July 30th, 1903, Vol. IV, pages 7658-7697.

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subject had been entered upon or were being prosecuted." He added, "I reconciled myself to the very obvious slight which had been cast upon me on the ground that probably your knowledge of my views on the general question did not encourage you to expect I would look with favor upon, or render much assistance toward carrying out, the object you had in view." Mr. Blair had advocated an immediate extension of the Intercolonial Railway from Montreal to the Georgian Bay, a connection by water during the season of lake navigation with the Canadian Northern at Port Arthur and the gradual construction of a railway by the government to Winnipeg. He opposed the eastern section which paralleled the Intercolonial, and also argued against immediate construction of the transcontinental section between Quebec and Winnipeg. He did not declare unequivocally against any contract with a private company but was definite in his preference for the Canadian Northern over the Grand Trunk. While in favor of State construction he reserved judgment as between State operation and lease to a private company.

Possibly the desire to join forces with Mr. Blair produced a degree of confusion in the councils of the Conservative party. The leaders of the Opposition saw advantage in an alliance with the dethroned minister but hesitated at absolute acceptance of his policy. Failure to effect a complete,

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or at least an immediate, accommodation perhaps weakened the force of the joint attack. Time was required to agree upon the direction in which they desired to travel. Moreover, no man in parliament was under greater suspicion among Conservatives than the adroit New Brunswick politician who had just been crowded out of a Liberal cabinet. They recognized his ability but doubted his integrity and knew that a confessed alliance with Mr. Blair would distress many thousands of Conservatives in the constituencies. The immediate patchwork policy of the Conservative Opposition, however, strongly resembled that which Mr. Blair had outlined. Later, as has been explained, the Opposition definitely committed itself to government construction and operation of the projected Transcontinental railway. As was inevitable the Grand Trunk contract was ratified by parliament and a general election followed.

The contract was the chief issue in the contest. Allied with the Opposition were Mr. Blair and the singularly bold and courageous promoters of the Canadian Northern. But for causes which are still shrouded in mystery Mr. Blair did not appear on the platform. Strange whispers ran through the country of underground manœuvres to accomplish the defeat of the government. It was stated that *La Presse*, the most influential and widely circulated of French-Canadian journals,

A MOVEMENT THAT FAILED

had passed under new control and would be turned against Laurier. The *St. John Telegraph*, one of the chief Liberal newspapers of the Atlantic provinces which had been Mr. Blair's special organ, was acquired by interests hostile to the government. Apparently the chief spirits in this fatuous and inept movement were David Russell, a wealthy promoter of St. John; J. N. Greenshields, solicitor for Mackenzie and Mann at Montreal; Arthur Dansereau, a French-Canadian journalist of ability and distinction, with Sir Hugh Graham of the *Montreal Daily Star* in the background. But the whole "conspiracy" ended in failure and ignominy. *La Presse*, notwithstanding the apparent transfer to a new proprietary, gave Sir Wilfrid Laurier an independent support in the election. Later William Mackenzie and Donald Mann affirmed over their signatures that *La Presse* was "not to be a Tory organ" but would be independent and would "give Sir Wilfrid Laurier a generous support."¹ It was announced that Mr. Blair, would take the platform in the election but he failed to do so although he had resigned the position of chairman of the Dominion Railway Commission to which he had been appointed by Laurier when he left the government. Sir Wilfrid was holding meetings in central Ontario when it was definitely announced that Mr. Blair would inter-

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 209.

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vene in the election. The prime minister cancelled one or two engagements and travelled to Ottawa. An interview between Blair and Laurier followed, but what passed between the two has never been revealed. Dr. Skelton, in the official *Life of Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, declares that contrary to rumor the prime minister did not apply any pressure to Mr. Blair as to the course he should follow.¹ Whether or not pressure was applied Mr. Blair maintained silence nor did he ever reappear in public life. One must reserve judgment on the whole "conspiracy," the agencies by which it was directed and the means by which it was defeated. There were rumors, suspicions, charges, denials, and mystery still surrounds the parts played by various actors in a sordid political comedy. Sir Wilfrid Laurier was not discredited. It may seem curious that he never took the country into his confidence, but he had a genius for silence when he conceived that silence was the part of wisdom. Mr. Borden naturally had no knowledge of these strange transactions. The object was not so much to give office to the Conservative leaders as to secure a majority in parliament which would destroy the Grand Trunk Pacific contract. The effect of the revelations, however, was to divide the forces which sought the defeat of the government and incidentally to give Sir Wilfrid a leverage over men who profited

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier," Vol. II, page 206.

THE AUTONOMY ACTS

by his consideration. When the constituencies had pronounced judgment it was revealed that the Liberal leader had won his third successive general election by the decisive majority of seventy-four and that only Ontario and Prince Edward Island had declared against the administration.

Before the general election of 1904 it was understood that the appeal of the Northwest Territories for full provincial autonomy would be granted. Only a few who enjoyed the special confidence of Sir Wilfrid knew that he had determined to establish, or at least to recognize, Roman Catholic Separate Schools in the new provinces. One or two public journals had hinted that this was his intention but the issue was practically excluded from the contest. In 1905 the bills to erect Saskatchewan and Alberta into full autonomous provinces were introduced in the House of Commons by the prime minister himself. Anticipating attack upon the school clauses he argued that it was the intention of parliament in 1875 when a system of government for the territories was devised to secure to the settlers of the prairie country all the educational rights and privileges possessed by the minorities in Ontario and Quebec, that Hon. George Brown had warned the senate that under the Act of 1876 separate schools would be guaranteed for all time, and that with this understanding the measure was approved without division in parliament. It was therefore in

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accordance with both law and tradition and also in agreement with the educational ordinances of the territorial government that the Catholic minority in the west should have the right to establish their own schools and to share in public funds for their support. He concluded as Dr. Skelton has said "with an unexpected defence of religious teaching in schools and a comparison between Canadian and United States school and social conditions." He said:

"We live in a country where in the seven provinces that constitute our nation, either by the will or by the tolerance of the people, in every school, Christian morals and Christian dogmas are taught to the youth of the country. We live by the side of a nation, a great nation, a nation for which I have the greatest admiration but whose example I would not take in everything, in whose schools, for fear that Christian dogmas in which all do not believe might be taught, Christian morals are not taught. When I compare these two countries, when I compare Canada with the United States, when I compare the status of the two nations, when I think upon their future, when I observe the social condition of civil society in each of them and when I observe in this country of ours a total absence of lynchings and an almost total absence of divorces and murders, for my part, I thank Heaven that we are living in a country where the young children of the land are taught Christian

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morals and Christian dogmas. Either the American system is right or the Canadian system is right. For my part I say this and I say it without hesitation. Time will show that we are in the right and in this instance as in many others, I have an abiding faith in the institutions of my own country."¹

It was not by accident that Sir Wilfrid made his declaration in favor of religious teaching. He knew that his position would have the complete assent of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and would appeal to a considerable element of the Protestant population. A united Catholic Church and a divided Protestantism would ensure strong support in the country. It is by no means certain that the appeal to Protestants was effective, but that he consolidated his coreligionists in support of the bills is beyond question. This is as good a time as any other to explain that the prime minister was no longer estranged from the Catholic Church and that henceforth he was among its faithful communicants. It is, however, neither asserted nor suggested that his return to the bosom of the Church was a factor in determining the character of the autonomy legislation. But it is true that as the years passed there was a modification if not a transformation in his religious, educational and national attitude and outlook. There was a time when he believed that the separate educational

¹ Hansard, February 21st, 1905, Vol. I, pages 1421-1438.

system of Ontario and Quebec should not be transplanted in western Canada. Again and again he urged these views upon the writer of this history. While he was always distressed by D'Alton McCarthy's attacks upon the French language he was in active sympathy with the national school principle for which Mr. McCarthy contended. It is conceivable that if Mr. McCarthy had lived to enter his cabinet the autonomy bills would have been less definite in recognition of separate schools in Saskatchewan and Alberta. There is the further fact that in the early nineties he sought to effect a coalition with William R. Meredith, leader of the Conservative party in Ontario, who opposed all legislation by Sir Oliver Mowat to improve the position of separate schools in the province and only hesitated in face of solemn constitutional guarantees to demand their abolition.¹ But the proposal for a coalition was never entertained by Sir William Meredith nor is there evidence of any compact or understanding between Sir Wilfrid and Mr. McCarthy concerning educational policy in western Canada.

The autonomy bills were drafted by Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick, minister of justice, so as to give the full measure of concession to the western Catholic minority. Not only was there no keener

¹ Sir William Meredith, leader of the Conservative party of Ontario from 1878 to 1894; Chief Justice of Ontario from 1894 until his death on August 21st, 1923; Chancellor of the University of Toronto from 1900.

MR. SIFTON'S POSITION

intellect in parliament than Mr. Fitzpatrick, but in his character there was a flavor of ecclesiasticism. No one was more fully trusted by the minority or more genuinely devoted to the church to which he belonged. Between Mr. Sifton and Mr. Fitzpatrick there was deep mutual suspicion and distrust. The bills were introduced into parliament while Mr. Sifton was recuperating in the south from a long strain of overwork. He had no thought that this would be done during his absence from the country. Naturally enough he contended that as the chief western minister he should have been permitted to examine the measures before they were submitted to parliament. He has always believed that deliberate advantage was taken of his absence and that it was the intention to get the bills through the House of Commons before he could return. But as soon as he learned that the bills had been introduced he hurried back to the capital and sought an interview with the prime minister. We do not know what passed between the leader and the minister but the first impression was that they had reached a mutual understanding. A few days later, however, Mr. Sifton's resignation from the cabinet was announced and he explained in parliament that he dissented from certain principles enunciated by Sir Wilfrid in the speech delivered when the bills were introduced and also from the specific provisions set forth in the educational clauses.

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Few men of greater practical capacity than Mr. Sifton have ever sat in a Canadian parliament. He had courage, genius for construction, skill in administration, high national temper, and a contempt for theories and unessentials which sometimes vexed the House of Commons and perhaps bred suspicion and misunderstanding. Afflicted by deafness he found the business of parliament trying and laborious. In council, however, he was singularly powerful and in the administration of the Department of the Interior and in settling the western prairies he displayed remarkable vigor and rarely failed to achieve the object to which he set himself. There was a cruel rumor that he was released from the cabinet because of a personal scandal in which he had become involved, but no evidence to justify the malicious report has ever been or ever will be produced.

The position taken by Mr. Sifton affected many of the western Liberal members with whom he was signally influential. There was a further increase of uneasiness among ministerialists when it was learned that Hon. W. S. Fielding, who had also been out of the country when the bills were introduced, was in substantial agreement with Mr. Sifton. Neither was opposed to recognition of separate schools and Catholic religious teaching but they contended that the bills as drafted established complete ecclesiastical control over the schools of the Catholic minority, endowed the

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church with a direct and enormous interest in the public lands set apart for the support of education, and deprived the new legislatures of the right to prescribe text-books for secular teaching and to establish uniform qualifications for teachers. An amendment to give effect to these objections was finally accepted by Sir Wilfrid, and as amended the bills were adopted by a vote of 140 to 59 in the House of Commons. Mr. Borden, Conservative leader, opposed the measures, but in the division he was deserted by the Conservative delegation from Quebec. Indeed, no stronger speeches were delivered in support of the autonomy bills than some of those that were made by Conservative members from the French province. They expressed the common feeling of Quebec, and in so far as they argued that the rights guaranteed to the Protestant minority of Quebec had been scrupulously respected and maintained by the legislature of the province they stood upon ground which could not be successfully challenged. Against their position was the contention that the educational clauses of the British North America Act expressed only a compromise between Quebec and Ontario, that separate schools were not imposed upon Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia when those provinces entered the Confederation, and that there was no obligation under the Constitution to apply the provisions affecting only Quebec and

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Ontario to the new western provinces. It was, however, necessary for opponents of the bills to meet the fact that separate schools had actually existed in the western territories and that only rights established by federal enactment and recognized in the law and practice of the territories were affirmed by the new provincial constitutions. Substantially the autonomists held that the educational clauses of the British North America Act should have been embodied in the provincial constitutions and the new provinces left free to determine the character of their educational institutions. It may be that appeal to the courts and a final decision by the Imperial Privy Council would have secured for the Roman Catholic minority in the prairie country all that was guaranteed by the Autonomy Acts. Possibly any constitutional right to separate schools in the new provinces would have been denied. It is vain now to argue the question and unprofitable to revive a controversy which divided parliament and the country and produced an unfortunate display of racial and sectarian feeling. The effect of that conflict was to detach support from Sir Wilfrid Laurier in many of the old Liberal constituencies of Ontario and to damage Mr. Borden irretrievably in the province of Quebec.

Neither party had a natural relation to the issue. Only a few years before the Liberal leaders were fulminating against interference with the

TWO BYE-ELECTIONS

educational autonomy of Manitoba while the Conservative leaders were asserting a supreme constitutional obligation to compel restoration of the Roman Catholic schools which the government of Manitoba had abolished. Both parties suffered from a sudden shifting of position which confused public opinion and drove a multitude of electors into new alliances. One wonders, however, if Sir Wilfrid would have framed the Autonomy Acts of 1905 just as they were framed if in 1900 he had secured a decisive majority in Ontario or even if he had held the elements of support in many English-speaking counties which returned his candidates in the general election that gave office to the Liberal party under his leadership. It is certain that from 1905 the Liberal party was in process of remaking and whatever the causes there were vital differences between the party which Laurier inherited and that which he left to his successors.

Before the bills were finally ratified by parliament there were bye-elections in London and in North Oxford, in the province of Ontario. For a generation London had inclined towards the Conservative party but after 1887, when C. S. Hyman appeared as the Liberal candidate with a superb organization, there was practically an equal division of strength between the two parties. North Oxford was a Presbyterian Liberal stronghold which could be depended upon to give a majority

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between 1,000 and 2,000 for a Liberal candidate. But in the contest of 1905 North Oxford gave a Liberal majority of only 338, and it is significant that few of those Liberals who deserted the party on the western educational issue ever again cast a ballot for the nominee of a Liberal convention. They were of the school of George Brown, opposed to ecclesiastical control in education and devoted to provincial rights as a fundamental principle of the Liberal party. In London, Mr. Hyman, who had entered the government as minister of public works and had therefore the prestige of ministerial office, was returned by a majority of 330 but the result had less significance and, moreover, it was afterwards established that bribery and personation were freely practised in behalf of the Liberal minister. It has to be said, however, that in the new western provinces there was no response to the agitation in Ontario against the educational clauses embodied in the provincial constitutions. Nor was any considerable support secured for the contention of the Conservative party that the natural resources of the western provinces should not remain under federal authority. It was argued by opponents of the bills that all the older provinces and even British Columbia controlled their resources in land, timber and minerals and that unless Saskatchewan and Alberta were similarly endowed they would have an inferior status in the Con-

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federation and be substantially subject colonies of older Canada. This view did not prevail with parliament nor was the prairie country impressed. Indeed, outside of Ontario the autonomist agitation left the depths of public opinion in the English provinces undisturbed. As was perhaps inevitable owing to his open hostility to the autonomy legislation, Hon. F. W. G. Haultain, who had achieved a solid national reputation as premier of the territories, was set aside by Sir Wilfrid when it became necessary to decide who should be called upon to form governments for the new provinces. In Saskatchewan, Walter Scott, and in Alberta, A. C. Rutherford, both active Liberals and reliable defenders of the new provincial constitutions, were called to the office of premier and when with completed cabinets they appealed to the constituencies both were sustained by decisive majorities. Moreover, during the twenty years that have passed since the two western provinces were established no Conservative government has ever held office in either. Saskatchewan has remained consistently faithful to the Liberal party while in Alberta down to 1921, when the Progressives defeated the old parties, successive Liberal governments had administered its affairs. In no political contest in either province has there ever been any popular condemnation of the educational clauses of the Autonomy Acts, but those clauses have been so interpreted as to maintain the

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essential integrity of the public school system as developed under the old ordinances of the territorial government. The guarantee of religious teaching for the minority has been respected but the English language has been maintained in its dominant position, all text-books have been authorized by the departments of education, and all teachers have been required to have common training and to hold common certificates of qualification. In practice the evils that were predicted have not appeared and possibly for communities of various racial and religious elements no better educational system could be devised than that which the provincial departments of education have developed in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

But if the educational clauses of the Autonomy Acts have been accepted and perhaps justified it is otherwise with the provisions which vested control over natural resources in the federal government. For years the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have demanded that these resources be restored to the provinces. During ten years of office, however, the Conservative leaders failed to give effect to the policy to which they committed themselves when the autonomy bills were before the federal parliament. If they did not actually abandon the position they practised a masterly inactivity. But at last under the Liberal government which came to office in the Dominion in 1921 an agreement to restore

THE NAVAL QUESTION

the natural resources to Alberta has been negotiated and it is inevitable that sooner or later Manitoba and Saskatchewan will regain possession of the resources of which they should never have been deprived. It is, however, by no means impossible to find formidable arguments to justify control of these resources by the federal government during the era of railway building and while a common land policy seemed to be an essential condition of successful western settlement.

If the agitation over the western Autonomy Acts weakened Sir Wilfrid Laurier in Ontario he had soon to face a graver danger in Quebec. Quebec was his fortress and a breach there threatened the loss of the whole position. Suddenly, in consequence of speeches in London in March, 1909, by Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, Mr. McKenna, first lord of the admiralty, and Sir Edward Grey, minister for foreign affairs, the imminence of the German menace was partly disclosed and the need of strengthening the navy pressed upon the Empire with alarming urgency. It may be that the object was to enlist the support of the Dominions rather than to affect opinion in Great Britain. Immediately, as was to have been expected, there was a movement in Australia and New Zealand to increase contributions or build new vessels for the common defence. Those Dominions stand out in the Pacific, as Canada does not, and they have a sense of dependence upon

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the navy which, rightly or wrongly, has never been shared in any acute degree by the Canadian people. Ever since confederation isolated voices in Canada have insisted that we should make some contribution to sea defence and now and again there has been acrid criticism of our reluctance to assume any portion of the common burden. For the most part, however, those who pleaded and admonished were unheard or treated merely as fretful and garrulous Imperialists. But even in Canada the warning speeches of British statesmen in 1909 disturbed tradition and touched the impulses to which Sir Wilfrid succumbed when he agreed to send Canadian soldiers to South Africa. Public journals began to demand action; the Conservative leaders saw a new issue on the horizon; British feeling again ran in flood across the country. In the House of Commons (March 29th, 1909) Sir George Foster in a speech of great moderation submitted a resolution in favour of the creation of a Canadian navy or an emergency gift of dreadnoughts to the mother country. The prime minister in reply declared that he would oppose, as he had always opposed, a money contribution to the British army or the British navy but offered through an amendment to accept the section of the Foster resolution which called for the organization of a Canadian naval service. Mr. Borden substantially agreed with Sir Wilfrid in argument and in conclusion.

A UNITED PARLIAMENT

It was apparent that there were no serious differences of opinion in parliament as to the duty of Canada and the policy which should be adopted. The prime minister's resolution was therefore accepted without division and without protest. The "House," it was declared, "will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service in coöperation with and in close relation to the imperial navy, along the lines suggested by the Admiralty at the last imperial conference, and in full sympathy with the view that the naval supremacy of Britain is essential to the security of commerce, the safety of the Empire and the peace of the world." Thus parliament under a French-speaking prime minister admitted and asserted the duty of the Canadian people to assist in naval defence as under a French-speaking prime minister Canada had sent soldiers overseas to aid in a war for the security and integrity of the Empire. It may be that the naval service to be established was comparatively insignificant but there was the assurance of a beginning and the deliberate acceptance of an imperial obligation which heretofore had not been recognized.

But the unanimity of parliament in support of the naval programme was broken by a contumacious faction in the Conservative parliamentary party and by a nationalist faction in Quebec, inspired and directed by Mr. Bourassa, and of

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which Mr. Monk, Conservative leader for Quebec, was the parliamentary mouthpiece. Mr. Bourassa had an irreconcilable quarrel with the prime minister. The source of his animus Sir Wilfrid himself never fully understood. It was not because Mr. Bourassa was denied preferment, because he could have had a seat in the cabinet or any other recognition within his desire. In the light of his later career the true explanation would seem to be that he was opposed to any close coöperation between Canada and Great Britain and feared that Laurier's power to draw Quebec within the imperial orbit was dangerous and must be diminished by sowing tares among his own people. At least he challenged Laurier's ascendancy in Quebec, through Monk divided the Conservative party, and finally was greatly instrumental in driving the Laurier government from office.

Mr. Borden at this time held the leadership of the Conservative party by a doubtful and uneasy tenure. It was contended that he lacked aggressive quality, was indecisive and ineffective, and inspired neither interest nor affection in the constituencies. But there are no flowers and few refreshing springs along the road which a politician out of office must travel. Grievous complaint was made because Mr. Borden, by accepting the Laurier resolution in favour of a Canadian naval service, had removed the question from the arena

THE NAVAL SERVICE BILL

of partisan controversy. It was realized that the naval issue could have been exploited to Laurier's disadvantage in the English provinces while the Nationalists struck at him in Quebec. But, as was alleged, by the weak complaisance of the Conservative leader, Laurier was not only immune from attack in the English constituencies but in so far as the naval programme was concerned could claim the support of English-speaking Conservatives against the inflammatory element of Quebec. Day by day the revolt among Conservatives widened and the position of Mr. Borden became more difficult. An alternative naval policy was demanded, and chiefly in order that the Nationalist attack should fall only upon the government.

The Naval Service bill presented to parliament by Sir Wilfrid in 1910 provided for a permanent naval corps, a reserve and a volunteer force, a naval college and a board to advise the department of marine. The force was to be under control of the Canadian government but in emergency by order-in-council could be put at the disposal of the Admiralty. There were to be five cruisers and six destroyers and the annual cost was estimated at \$3,000,000. Mr. Borden, forgetting the unanimous resolution of the previous session, offered in 1910 an amendment declaring that the government's proposals did not follow the recommendations of the Admiralty; that the reservation of power to withhold the naval forces

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of Canada from those of the Empire in time of war was ill-advised and dangerous; that no proposals could be accepted which did not ensure unity of organization and of action without which there could be no effective coöperation for the common defence of the Empire; that the proposals would necessitate heavy outlay for construction and maintenance of the vessels but would give no immediate or effective aid to the Empire nor any adequate or satisfactory results to Canada; that no permanent naval policy involving large future expenditures should be accepted until it was submitted to the people and had received their approval; and that "in the meantime the immediate duty of Canada and the impending necessity of the Empire can best be discharged and met by placing without delay, at the disposal of the imperial authorities, as a free and loyal contribution from the people of Canada, such an amount as may be sufficient to purchase or construct two battleships or armoured cruisers of the latest dreadnought type, giving to the Admiralty full discretion to expend the said sum at such time and for such purposes of naval defence as in their judgment may best serve to increase the united strength of the Empire and thus ensure its peace and security." An amendment to the amendment by Mr. Monk stated the position of the Nationalists. "This House," it read, "while declaring its unalterable

LOOKING TO NATIONALISTS

devotion to the British Crown is of opinion that the bill now submitted for its consideration changes the relations of Canada with the Empire and ought in consequence to be submitted to the Canadian people in order to obtain the nation's opinion by means of a plebiscite."

The proposal of a plebiscite was not only an evasion of the issue but was also a direct repudiation of the unanimous declaration of parliament in favour of a Canadian naval service. It is clear that the object was to attract the Nationalists, to establish a connection with Mr. Bourassa and to profit by the agitation in Quebec against the naval programme. Mr. Borden's amendment also provided an alternative naval policy in conflict with the original naval resolution of which he had approved and which indeed was of Conservative origin. Thereafter in Quebec Laurier was denounced as a traitor to his compatriots, an apostle of centralization, and the agent of imperial jingoism. Mr. Bourassa saw in the naval programme a preparation for conscription. "A day will come," he said, "when draft officers will be scouring the country and compelling young men to enlist either in the navy or in the army, to go to foreign lands and fight the battles of Great Britain, to coöperate with Downing Street in the oppression of weak countries, and to maintain at the price of their blood the supremacy of the British flag in Asia or in Africa." A bye-

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election in the old Liberal constituency of Drummond and Arthabaska which Laurier had represented, where he had lived for a score of years and where he was loved and esteemed by every element of the population, was carried by the Nationalists by 207 of a majority. The result astounded the prime minister and startled the country. Never before perhaps in the political history of Canada was a constituency so inflamed by passionate rhetoric or so shaken by vehement vituperation and denunciation. Sir Wilfrid, when the result in Drummond and Arthabaska was announced, said he felt like the boy who stubbed his toe "he was too big to cry and it hurt too much to laugh." Looking backward one sees only a pitiful comedy but the leader of the government realized that his position in Quebec was actually threatened and thereafter Bourassa became his obsession. But while he was the object of this insensate fury in Quebec the Conservatives of the English provinces denounced the naval programme as inadequate and ineffective, as a step towards separation from Great Britain, as a denial of the clear obligation of Canada to bear a fair portion of the burden of sea defence and as a deliberate refusal to recognize an emergency in Europe by which the very existence of the Empire was imperilled. There is no more distressing chapter in Canadian history and it is redeemed only by the patience, dignity and fortitude with

A DUBIOUS ALLIANCE

which the French-Canadian prime minister bore the ingratitude of his own people and the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of his political opponents in the English provinces.

There is, however, nothing stranger in Laurier's career than the fear of Bourassa which, as has been said, became an obsession, as there is nothing more cynical and repelling in Canadian political history than the alliance between the Conservatives and Nationalists in the contest of 1911 which brought the Conservative party back to office. It is fair to say that Mr. Borden made no direct advances to the Nationalists nor is it believed that there ever was any understanding between himself and Bourassa. But there were Conservative leaders who found the way of approach to the Nationalists and if they entered by the back door they were none the less welcome since they carried the supplies which were needed to fertilize barren areas in the constituencies. It may be said that Borden should have denounced Bourassa and rejected Nationalist support. But nothing so heroic belongs to practical politics. It is doubtful if in like circumstances Sir John Macdonald, the master strategist of Canadian politics, or Sir Wilfrid Laurier himself, his dexterous and sagacious pupil, would have postured against the Nationalists to the certain loss of constituencies and the risk of defeat in the election. The Nationalist alliance, if such it was,

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contributed to the immediate success of the Conservative party. There were, however, lasting consequences neither to the advantage of the party nor to the advantage of Canada.

Quebec in 1911 was as unjust to Laurier as was Ontario in 1900. In his first term of office Laurier's whole policy was designed to conciliate the English provinces and to strengthen his personal position with the English majority. He settled the bitter, divisive, disruptive Manitoba school dispute, with more cunning perhaps than was apparent at the moment, but without "coercion" and to the immediate satisfaction of even the Orange element of the population. He established by a bold challenge to British statesmen the imperial trade preference which Conservatives had long professed to favour but had failed to accomplish because they could not induce imperial governments to repeal favoured nation treaties with Belgium and Germany which forbade preferential treatment of British manufactures by the Dominions. He maintained in essence the Conservative tariff and terminated negotiations at Washington for a wide and comprehensive adjustment of differences between the two countries, ostensibly because of failure to agree upon the Alaskan boundary but actually because the American plenipotentiaries demanded reductions in the Canadian tariff which he would not concede. Despite genuine conviction and per-

THE TRADE AGREEMENT

haps some prejudice he agreed to the despatch of Canadian contingents to South Africa at the manifest demand of the English provinces and in face of irritation and protest from Quebec. There was nothing Sir Wilfrid more greatly desired than the confidence of the English-speaking people of Canada and particularly the support of a majority of the constituencies of Ontario. But he failed to secure a majority in 1896 when he was scourged by the ecclesiastics of Quebec for his courageous resistance to the restoration by federal compulsion of Roman Catholic schools in Manitoba, while in 1900 despite assiduous cultivation of English favour and policies which should have commanded the support of Orangemen, Imperialists and protectionists his reward in Ontario was a majority of twenty-two for the Conservative Opposition. So his naval programme, which was a concession to the sentiment of the English provinces, seriously undermined his position in Quebec but won no compensating support elsewhere.

It was, however, the trade agreement with the United States that brought the government to defeat. Towards the close of 1910 it was whispered that the Taft administration was favourably disposed towards a commercial treaty with Canada. Dr. J. A. Macdonald, editor of the *Toronto Globe*, who had achieved great popularity as a speaker and lecturer in the United States,

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seems to have broached the question to the Republican president and to have discovered that advances from the Canadian government would not be discouraged. He communicated with Sir Wilfrid, who apparently was very willing to enter again into negotiations with Washington. There were various reasons for his ready acceptance of the proposal. The government was beset by many dangers and difficulties. Successive scandals had injured the reputation of the ministry in the constituencies. A eucharistic congress at Montreal and application of the *ne temere* decree to marriages between Protestants and Catholics in Quebec had produced a sullen feeling among thousands of Protestants and undoubtedly there was deliberate and calculated effort to mobilize this prevalent irritation against the Catholic leader of the Liberal party. The eucharistic congress was a striking manifestation of Catholic power and unity and it was perhaps inevitable that the more extreme Protestant element should be disturbed and excited. The assertion of authority to annul mixed marriages was bound to provoke anger and resentment among those who could not admit any right of the Church to challenge the power of the State. There was, too, another reason, still more influential, for the prime minister to seek such a new issue as would be provided by a commercial agreement with Washington. During the summer he had held a

THE TARIFF REAPPEARS

series of meetings in the prairie provinces where for a decade his ascendancy had been almost unchallenged. But he now found general evidences of dissatisfaction with the tariff. The Grain Growers had not yet organized as a separate political group but in many constituencies they had become the dominant section of the Liberal party. They remembered the old pledges that the principle of protection would be eliminated, and demanded such an immediate reduction of duties as would recognize and express western sentiment. At successive meetings the prime minister was embarrassed and harassed by importunate "hecklers," who could not be silenced and would not be satisfied with hesitation or evasion. It was plain, however, that any promise of radical tariff reduction would excite the industrial interests of older Canada and probably involve heavier political losses than could be offset by gains in the prairie country. In this new and difficult situation there was a prospect of relief through the negotiation of a reciprocal trade agreement with Washington. When it was learned, therefore, that the Taft administration would receive representatives of Canada, Hon. W. S. Fielding and Hon. William Paterson were sent to the American capital to seek commercial concessions which had been consistently and resolutely denied for half a century.

From the first the negotiations prospered. Un-

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der the gracious influence of Mr. Taft the atmosphere was friendly and accommodating. He desired a treaty to disarm opponents of a protectionist tariff and for the same reason a treaty was desired by Laurier. The result, therefore, was an agreement satisfactory to the negotiators and subject only to ratification by the Congress of the United States and the Parliament of Canada. By the treaty the chief natural products of the two countries were put on the free list or the duties reduced. Duties were lowered on a list of manufactures but in most cases only to the level of the intermediate Canadian tariff. It was provided that the American duties on pulp and paper would be reduced if and when the export restrictions maintained by the Canadian provinces were removed. It was further provided that the treaty should go into effect by concurrent legislation and should be terminable on notice by either country.

In January, 1910, Mr. Fielding submitted the agreement to the House of Commons. The government was wholly confident that it would be ratified without delay and without serious division of opinion in parliament or in the country. There was reason for its confidence in the immediate temper of the Opposition. It cannot be doubted that if a vote had been taken when Mr. Fielding made his explanatory statement the bulk of the Conservatives would have gone for ratification.

FEELING AMONG CONSERVATIVES

It is strange that ministers did not discover how great was the dismay and confusion among the parliamentary Conservatives and press for an early decision upon the treaty. They gave the Opposition the time which it so badly needed to recover its balance and its spirit and the opportunity as badly needed to ascertain the attitude of the commercial and financial interests and the general temper of Conservatives throughout the country. It was beyond question the pressure of opinion from outside which determined the Conservative parliamentary party to oppose the agreement. The *Toronto Daily News* was perhaps the first newspaper to demand its rejection although that position was only taken after some days of hesitation and indecision: The *News* had established a close relation with the Conservative party and perhaps for that reason had no immediate expectation that the Opposition at Ottawa would unite against the treaty. The *Montreal Daily Star*, after repeated appeals to Sir Wilfrid Laurier to repudiate the agreement negotiated by Mr. Fielding and Mr. Paterson, entered upon an energetic campaign to secure its defeat in parliament and unquestionably was a powerful agency in exciting public opinion against the government. Sir James Whitney, premier of Ontario, and Hon. Frank Cochrane, a member of his cabinet, from the day the treaty was laid before the House of Commons urged the leaders of the Con-

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servative party at Ottawa to oppose its ratification. Like pressure was exerted by Hon. R. P. Roblin, premier of Manitoba, and Hon. Robert Rogers, a singularly bold and militant figure among western Conservatives. Even more influential, perhaps, was the action of a group of influential Liberals in Toronto, representing the financial and commercial interests, who took counsel together and finally issued a joint manifesto condemnatory of the reciprocal agreement in all its provisions, implications and tendencies. As unexpected and of not less significance was the appearance of Hon. Clifford Sifton among the aggressive opponents of ratification.

In Dr. Skelton's "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier" there is a reference to Mr. Sifton which is remarkable for its misunderstanding and inaccuracy. "It was Clifford Sifton," he says, "aided by Zebulon Lash, the confidential lawyer of Mackenzie and Mann, who organized the revolt of the eighteen, a carefully staged and very effective repudiation of reciprocity by eighteen residents of Toronto, all eminent in the world of finance, and all attached or semi-detached Liberals, and it was Clifford Sifton who organized the no-popery cry on the back concessions of Ontario."¹ The truth is, however, that Mr. Sifton had absolutely no connection with the "revolt of the eighteen." The first man to suggest concerted

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier," Vol. II, page 372.

INFLUENCE OF MR. LASH

action by the business interests of Toronto was Edward Gurney, an influential manufacturer and one of the pioneers in the agitation for protection in Canada. But he made little headway until Mr. Lash with high enthusiasm and unflagging energy and apparently without consultation with Mr. Gurney gave himself to the task which Mr. Gurney seems to have abandoned. There was neither communication nor consultation with Mr. Sifton. Neither Mr. Lash nor any of his associates in the movement at Toronto had any knowledge or any expectation that Mr. Sifton would oppose the policy to which the government was committed. Nor is there any justification for the statement that Mr. Sifton "organized the no-popery cry on the back concessions of Ontario." In parliament and throughout the electoral contest Sifton spoke with restraint and dignity. There was no temper, no demagogic denunciation, no argument advanced which was not rooted in national and economic considerations. Whether one accepts or rejects his conclusions it has to be admitted that no more effective speeches ever were delivered in Canada. There was strength in their moderation and freedom from any attempt to excite emotions or inflame passions and prejudices. Singularly effective and destructive also were the speeches of W. T. White, who threw himself with ardour into the contest against a leader to whom he was attached and a govern-

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ment which he had loyally supported, because he was profoundly apprehensive that the agreement negotiated at Washington would lessen Canada's freedom to determine commercial policy with a single regard to Canadian interests, imperil great investments in industry and transportation, decrease trade between Canadian provinces and ultimately create commercial alliances with a foreign country inimical to fiscal autonomy and national independence. Mr. Borden, once the direction to be taken was determined, led the Conservative party with vigour and courage. There were vagrant suggestions that the position of the opponents of reciprocity would be strengthened if a leader less closely identified with the Conservative party and more acceptable to the dissident Liberals could be found, but the proposal was not seriously entertained. Mr. Borden had, notwithstanding a passing disaffection among his followers in parliament, solid qualities which inspired respect and confidence in the constituencies and a sober self-control which gave character and dignity to public controversy. Whatever may have been his deficiencies as a political leader he committed few indiscretions, and if he lacked the warmth which begets affection he had a power of calm and logical argument which produced conviction.

As was inevitable many Conservative speakers in the contest were not so judicial and moderate

ARGUMENTS AGAINST RECIPROCITY

as the leader. It was contended that the agreement with Washington was a deliberate step towards separation from Great Britain and a preparation for the annexation of Canada to the United States. Nothing is more certain, however, than that the government had no separatist design nor any desire to disturb the filial relation between Canada and the mother country. The only object was to give Canadian producers freer access to American markets and to secure better prices for their products. For half a century governments in Canada, whether Liberal or Conservative, had endeavoured to secure a treaty of reciprocity with the United States and to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his associates, who at last had negotiated such a treaty, it was inconceivable that parliament and people would not rejoice and approve. But again and again Canadian negotiators had returned from Washington empty handed. Among many Canadians these continual rebuffs had produced a feeling of humiliation and resentment. The thing so eagerly sought and so long denied had come to be regarded as unattainable if not as actually undesirable. Moreover, growth in population, in production, and in prosperity despite comparative exclusion from United States markets had fostered in the Dominion a new spirit of confidence and self-reliance. There were, too, not a few Canadians who would not have reciprocity when it was offered because

they could not get it when it was wanted. But far more weighty considerations than human perversity, resentment, and prejudice determined the decision of the Canadian people.

It was felt that the agreement admitted the United States to a dangerous partnership in control of the natural resources of Canada. It was remembered that the McKinley and Dingley tariffs had produced a desperate condition in agriculture, forced Canadian farmers to find markets abroad and obliged the Canadian government to provide facilities for oversea shipment of farm products. The American policy of exclusion had also compelled the Dominion to create at heavy cost a system of transportation designed to carry traffic eastward and westward and there was grave danger that any serious reversal of policy would divert trade southward, decrease the earnings of Canadian railways, reduce the volume of trade between the provinces, and impair heavy national investments. There was again the natural apprehension of the industrial interests that free trade in manufactures would follow free trade in natural products. It was recognized also that a treaty dependent upon concurrent legislation could be summarily terminated by a protectionist majority in congress and new conditions and new interests established in Canada under the treaty be vitally disturbed by the reversal of American policy. Finally, there was apprehension that the

“PARTING OF THE WAYS”

long effect of the treaty would be to turn an ever-increasing volume of the trade of Canada into American channels, gradually but inevitably disturb commercial relations with Great Britain, prevent future tariff preferences throughout the Empire, and ultimately affect the political connection between the Dominion and the mother country.

It may be that there was not absolute consistency between the various arguments advanced against the agreement with Washington, but it is certain that every one of these considerations made an appeal to some element of the population. Moreover, the advocates of the treaty in the United States provided effective ammunition for its opponents in Canada. Mr. Taft declared in one of his speeches that “Canada was at the parting of the ways” and the phrase was used with deadly effect by the imperialists and protectionists of the Conservative party. In an address at the banquet of the Associated Press and Newspaper Publishers in New York (April 27th, 1911) Mr. Taft explained that they had offered Canada “absolute free trade in all products of either country, manufactured or natural, but that the Canadian commissioners did not feel justified in going so far.” He stated that one conclusive reason for closing the contract was “the opportunity which it gives us to increase the supply of our natural resources, which with the wasteful-

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ness of children we have wantonly exhausted.” He pointed out that “the timber resources of Canada which will open themselves to us under the operation of this agreement are now apparently inexhaustible.” There were, he said, broader and better reasons than these which were merely economic for supporting the agreement. “I have said,” he added, “that this is a critical time in the solution of the question of reciprocity. It is critical because unless it is now decided favourably to reciprocity it is exceedingly probable that no such opportunity will ever again come to the United States. The forces which are at work in England and Canada to separate her by a Chinese wall from the United States and to make her part of an imperial commercial band reaching from England around the world to England again by a system of preferential tariffs, will derive an impulse from the rejection of this treaty, and if we would have reciprocity with all the advantages that I have described and that I earnestly and sincerely believe will follow its adoption, we must take it now or give it up forever.”

Mr. Taft denied that the American negotiators of the treaty had any thought of “annexation,” or any design to affect the political independence of Canada and all his later career demonstrates the simple and absolute sincerity of the statement. But the speech in New York became a destructive instrument in the hands of the Can-

“INDISCRETIONS”

adian assailants of the treaty. A few weeks after the general election in Canada Mr. Roosevelt said to Mr. Borden: “You must be very grateful to our friend, Mr. Taft.” But the Republican president had to meet the attacks of a formidable body of Republican protectionists and what became “indiscretions” in Canada were perhaps valid and necessary arguments in the United States. One remembers, too, what was said by a despairing Republican in the presidential contest of 1912, “Mr. Taft is a good man but the damndest excuse for a vote getter the world ever saw.” Nor was Mr. Taft alone in the “indiscretions” which assisted the defeat of reciprocity in Canada. Eugene N. Foss, Governor of Massachusetts, declared that if the trade agreement should go into effect “our present railroads will increase their facilities and extend their lines to handle the increased business; the great transcontinental lines of Canada will come to the port of Boston which is the natural port of eastern Canada as well as New England; new factories in all lines will be established here, for with these conditions our capital will no longer seek Canada for the purpose of building up those factories which it is now forced to build in Canada by unnatural tariff conditions.” James J. Hill of the Great Northern Railway System, a powerful influence in the United States, warned the American people that if the agreement were not accepted

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“an imperial trade policy” would make impossible the negotiation of a like treaty in the future. “There ought not,” he said, “to be one vote in congress or one vote in the country against an arrangement worth more than armies and navies, more in dollars and cents than the organization of other markets for which we are prepared to pay huge sums.” James Wilson, Secretary for Agriculture in the Taft administration said: “The trains that bring farm products to the United States will take farm, orchard and manufactured goods back, and whether the political union of the two countries ever comes or not we will become more and more one people, developing along similar lines and supplementing each other in many respects, the raw material that comes from the Canadian farm will be manufactured in the United States and what is not needed will be sent to foreign countries.” Champ Clark, leader of the Democratic party in the House of Representatives, declared he was for the treaty “because I hope to see the day when the American flag will float over every square foot of the British North American possessions, clear to the North Pole. They speak our language, their institutions are much like ours, they are trained in the difficult art of self-government. My judgment is that if the treaty of 1854 had never been abrogated the chances of a consolidation of the two countries would have been much

DESTRUCTIVE ARGUMENTS

greater than they are now. I have no doubt whatever that the day is not far distant when Great Britain will joyfully see all her North American possessions become part of this Republic." It may be that undue emphasis was put upon this statement but its destructive effect in Canada cannot easily be exaggerated. Moreover, Champ Clark was not an insignificant political figure at Washington. A year later he became Speaker of the House of Representatives. In successive ballots at the national Democratic convention of 1912 he was the most formidable opponent of Woodrow Wilson for the party nomination for the presidency. Under attack for linking reciprocity with annexation he affirmed that he wanted reciprocity because it would tend toward a union of the two countries, that he had said so a thousand times, that he would repeat the statement as often as it was pertinent and that nine-tenths of the American people agreed with his position.

It was unfortunate for the Laurier government that every argument advanced in Canada against reciprocity was supported by the statements of newspapers and political and commercial leaders in the United States. The evils that it was alleged would follow in Canada could not be distinguished from the advantages that it was argued would accrue to the American people. An argument for ratification of the treaty by congress became an

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argument for rejection by the Canadian parliament. Sir Wilfrid was slow to take alarm and apparently never believed that the government could be defeated. There could be no greater evidence of his confidence than the fact that he dissolved parliament two years before he needed to go to the constituencies. He even agreed to adjourn parliament from May 18th until July 19th in order to attend an imperial conference. During his absence in England Mr. Borden made many speeches in the western provinces and a sustained attack was directed against the trade agreement by the press, from the platform, and through every agency which the Conservative leaders could employ. In parliament it was determined to use all the resources of obstruction to delay progress of the measure and force an appeal to the people, and these resources were formidable in an assembly which had no system of closure. There is no doubt, however, that the government could have finally prevailed over the Opposition if the ministers had persisted in the endeavour to secure ratification. It is true that in 1908 the Liberal majority in the House of Commons had been reduced to forty-six, but only Sir Clifford Sifton, W. M. German of Welland and Lloyd Harris of Brantford had gone over to the Opposition on the trade issue and there was, therefore, no danger of a parliamentary defeat. If the agreement had been ratified and the election

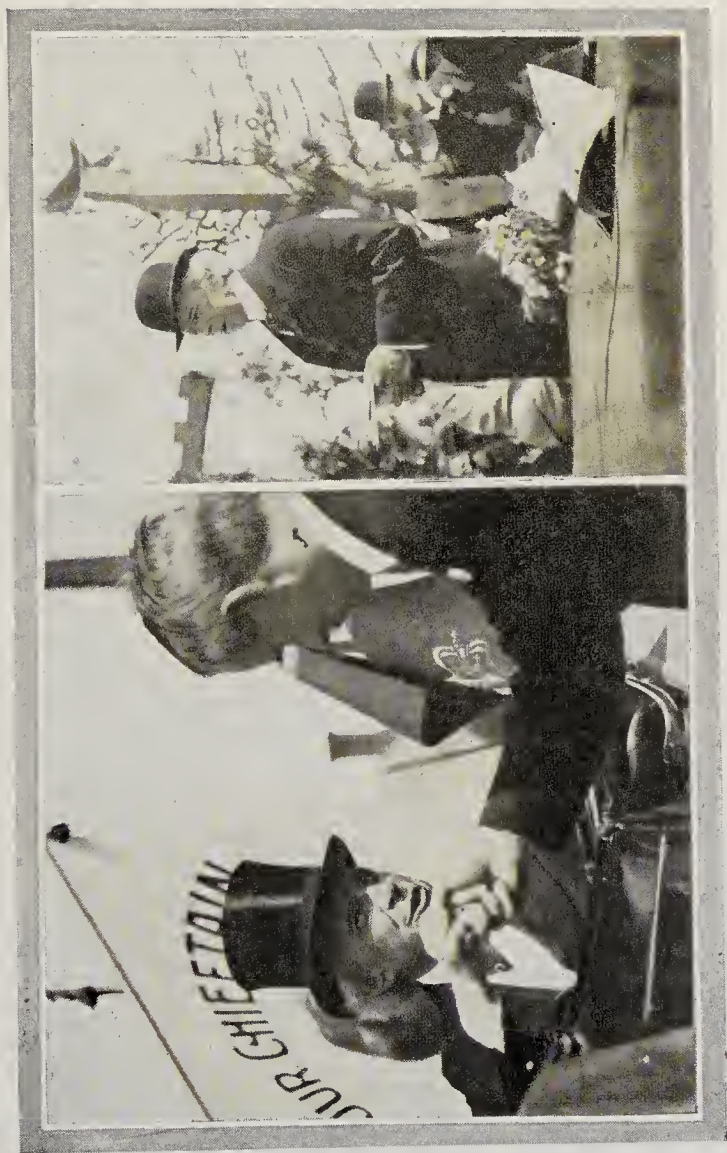
THE GOVERNMENT DEFEATED

delayed for two years it is conceivable that a judgment upon the actual effects of reciprocity rather than upon fears and apprehensions would have been more favourable to the Government. But, as has been said, the Liberal party had no thought of defeat and ten days after the House reassembled it was dissolved and polling fixed for September 21st. The elder Sir Charles Tupper once said that his handling of reciprocity proved that Laurier was neither a politician nor a statesman. If he had been a politician, Sir Charles declared, he would have dissolved Parliament when the trade agreement was presented by Mr. Fielding and have carried the country; if he had been a statesman he would never have made the agreement. Sir Wilfrid was both a politician and a statesman but there was miscalculation and misjudgment in precipitating a general election and in the campaign which followed there was neglect of the possible economic advantages of reciprocity, undue manifestations of alarm over the allegations of disloyalty, and generally a defensive attitude which encouraged aggressive attack.

The election, as fiercely contested as any in the history of Canada, gave a majority of forty-five against the government. Seven Liberal ministers were defeated and among these Mr. Fielding and Mr. Paterson who had negotiated the agreement at Washington. In Ontario only fourteen

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Liberals were elected while in Quebec thirty-seven Conservatives and Nationalists were returned. The middle western provinces gave Liberal majorities but Manitoba and British Columbia declared almost as strongly for the Opposition. In Quebec reciprocity was not the determining issue as it was in the other provinces. Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Monk directed the campaign and the Opposition candidates elected constituted almost a solid body of Nationalists. It can hardly be doubted that the deliberate object of Mr. Bourassa was to control the new House of Commons. If Mr. Monk was not actually subordinate to Mr. Bourassa it is certain that Bourassa controlled the Nationalist faction. The strength of the faction Mr. Borden discovered when he came to form a government. While Sir Wilfrid Laurier was pictured in Quebec as a creature of Downing Street, a militarist and an imperialist and his naval programme denounced with simulated fury, in Ontario his race and his religion and a spreading apprehension that the Roman Catholic hierarchy with his connivance was establishing an ascendancy over the government and moulding public policy were not without influence on a section of the electorate. In a private letter written after the election Sir Wilfrid said: "It is the province of Ontario which has defeated us. Our losses elsewhere were not very serious and would simply have reduced our majority but



ON THE HUSTINGS, 1908—1910

LAURIER ON THE RESULT

Ontario went solid against us. It is becoming more and more manifest to me that it was not reciprocity that was turned down, but a Catholic premier. All the information which comes to me from that province makes this quite evident."¹ Even if it be necessary to insist that the government was defeated chiefly upon the trade agreement it is yet true that inflammatory Nationalist attack in Quebec and Protestant suspicion in Ontario were contributing factors in the result. One remembers, however, that Sir Wilfrid once said, in the serene philosophic temper which he so often displayed, that no political leader who found it necessary to cultivate Quebec had any right to expect an equal measure of support in Ontario. Only Sir John Macdonald could take a majority out of both provinces.

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier," by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 382.

CHAPTER XXIX

AGAIN IN OPPOSITION

IT was not the fortune of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to be restored to office. He accepted defeat with apparent serenity and there was not less courtesy, urbanity and dignity in his bearing in Parliament. Nor was he less beloved by his own party or less esteemed by the masses of the people. There are those who insist that the capacity of a political leader is measured by the degree of hatred he inspires among his opponents. But they were few who hated Laurier and few towards whom he cherished animosity. Resolute, unyielding, uncompromising he could be in pursuit of his objects, and to win he could wound, but the desire to wound was seldom a dominating motive and there was not much of malice or envy in his disposition.

There is reason to think, however, that he never was reconciled to the defeat over reciprocity. He was uneasily conscious of the fact that he had misread public opinion and underrated the forces against which he would have to contend. He resented the action of the protected interests which he had persuaded himself would be inactive in the contest. He was unrelenting in his

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attitude towards the Nationalists of Quebec by whom he was misrepresented, calumniated, and defamed. There was no restoration of confidential relations with Sir William Mackenzie from whom he expected support or at least neutrality from considerations alike of prudence and of gratitude. Thereafter he was continuously hostile to the interests which Mackenzie and Mann represented. Nor did he ever forget to denounce the coöperation of Conservatives and Nationalists as unjust, immoral, indecent, and unpatriotic. To a degree his balance was restored but unquestionably all his future was affected by the defeat of 1911 and by a settled, persistent, resolute determination to overcome the combination of forces by which the defeat was accomplished.

Mr. Borden faced no easy task when he was called upon to form a government. A union of Conservatives and Nationalists in the loose freedom of opposition, as had been demonstrated, was not beyond the resources of practical politics; a union of these forces in a Conservative cabinet was a much more formidable undertaking. Naturally Mr. Monk and Mr. Bourassa demanded an adequate representation of Nationalists in the government. To the demand Mr. Borden was reluctant to accede and it is certain that few Conservatives in the English provinces desired a continuance or an actual, official recognition of

NATIONALISTS IN THE CABINET

the dubious partnership. The Nationalists, however, had a position of advantage which could not be ignored. It was made very plain to the Conservative leader that if Nationalists were excluded from the cabinet they would enter parliament as an organized unit against any government that it was in his power to construct. It is true that Mr. Borden had a bare majority without Nationalist support since in Quebec a few Conservatives who had repudiated the Nationalist programme had been elected. But a government constituted in defiance of the Nationalists probably could not have survived a single session of parliament. There was, therefore, the prospect of a parliamentary defeat, and of another general election of doubtful result with the Nationalists seeking revenge for the exclusion of their leaders from office. Mr. Borden had practically no alternative but to surrender, which he did with perhaps more misgiving than the country ever fully understood. Three Nationalists were taken into the cabinet. F. D. Monk became minister of public works; L. P. Pelletier, postmaster-general; and W. B. Nantel, minister of inland revenue. Conspicuous among the ministers from Ontario was W. T. White, who had done such effective service in the election as the accepted mouthpiece of the revolting Liberals. The cabinet as finally constituted was not remarkable for talent or distinction but it was respectable and was accepted with

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reasonable complacency by the Conservative party throughout the country.

The first session of parliament under the new government was comparatively unimportant. Ministers were not firmly settled in their departments. Even among many Liberals there was a disposition to accept the verdict of the country against reciprocity. Time was taken to develop an alternative naval programme. In the press, however, there was continuous discussion of the naval question and there was an organized effort by a group representing both the political parties to discover a policy upon which parliament could unite as expressing the common sentiment of the Canadian people and measurably discharging the obligation of the Dominion to bear a portion of the burden of sea defence. In June, 1912, it was announced that Sir Robert Borden; Mr. Hazen, minister of marine and Fisheries; Mr. Doherty, minister of justice; and Mr. Pelletier, postmaster-general, would go to England to consult the imperial government upon naval and other questions of common concern to the Dominion and the mother country. Nothing could have been more cordial than the reception accorded the new Canadian premier in Great Britain. As leader in the struggle to defeat a trade measure which a great section of the British people had come to believe would estrange Canada commercially and perhaps politically from

BORDEN IN ENGLAND

the mother country he made just such an appeal to British sentiment as did Sir Wilfrid Laurier when he first appeared in London with the gift of preference. It has to be said, too, that the Conservative prime minister of Canada during this first official visit to Great Britain won a place in the regard and confidence of the British people which he never lost. There were many banquets and much speaking. There was all the familiar social drudgery to which the statesmen of the Dominions must submit in the mother country and which they do not find distasteful whatever they may profess. There was an attentive press, eager hosts, the competition of country houses and all those official civilities which are regarded as of infinite value in the intercourse of social and official Britain with foreign countries but which a school of perverted thinkers in the Dominions seem to regard as dangerous in intercourse between the British nations.

The speeches of Sir Robert Borden cannot easily be distinguished from those which Sir Wilfrid Laurier would have delivered under like circumstances. Indeed, if one reads to the end of the chapter it will be found that the "imperialism" of the Conservative leader was at least as flexible and as warily seasoned for Canadian consumption as was that of the French leader of the Liberal party. At the Royal Colonial Institute (July 10th, 1912), Sir Robert declared

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that he came as the representative of a people determined to work out their destiny as a nation of the British Empire. He had, he said, always held the conviction that the sea defences of the Empire could best be secured by one navy. "Our ideal has been one King, one flag, one Empire, one navy, the latter powerful enough to vindicate the flag and maintain the integrity of the Empire." It was, however, necessary to remember that those who became responsible for Empire defence must have some voice in the policy which shaped the issues of peace and war, and he added: "I would like you to understand that Canada does not propose to be an adjunct even of the British Empire."

In another speech he said: "The time is at hand when the Dominions will be called upon to take their reasonable and legitimate share in maintaining the security of the Empire. I need not say that in time of peril I believe every Dominion, I am sure that Canada would give a response not less loyal or less earnest than that of the motherland herself. One realizes, however, that when the day of peril shall have arrived the day for effective preparation may have passed. I conceive that those who accept a share in and a responsibility for the defence and security of this vast Empire are no longer to be considered as wards by self-constituted guardians." He said again: "The supremacy of the seas must be main-

ONE NAVY

tained by one navy, for that supremacy could be maintained only by a navy established under one central control and direction.”

Naturally these speeches were well received in Great Britain. In placing the emphasis upon one navy he expressed the deepest conviction of the Admiralty and the desire of all responsible British statesmen. It was made apparent also that the project of a Canadian navy was to be abandoned and that the Nationalist faction of Quebec was not to dictate the naval policy of the Borden administration. Upon his return to Canada Sir Robert was greeted by a friendly demonstration at Quebec and later was honoured by impressive banquets at Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. There seemed to be general approval of the course he had taken in Great Britain. As yet few signs appeared of the fierce and bitter controversy which was to follow when the policy which had been elaborated in consultation with the Admiralty was laid before the House of Commons.

Not until December 5th was there full and definite disclosure of the government's programme. In the speech outlining and defending the proposals the prime minister reviewed conditions in Europe, emphasized the navy as the Empire's strong arm of defence, pointed out that the trade routes vital to the existence of the Empire were inadequately protected by reason of necessary concentration in home waters, that the

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navy was now only predominant in the North Sea, that the nations of Europe had millions of men under arms while Britain could not send out an expeditionary force of more than 150,000, that between 1902 and 1912 British naval expenditure had increased from \$152,000,000 to \$220,000,000, and that "the day has come when either the existence of this Empire will be imperilled or the young and mighty Dominions must join with the motherland to make secure the common safety and the common heritage."

Substantially the proposal of the government was that Canada should contribute three battleships to the imperial navy at an estimated cost of \$35,000,000. The prime minister explained that the three battleships would range themselves in the battle line of the Empire with those of the mother country, of Australia, and of New Zealand, that they would be the three most powerful ships in the world, and that "they would bear historic names associated with this country." They would be maintained and controlled as part of the Royal Navy, but it was understood that "if at any time in the future it should be the will of the Canadian people to establish a Canadian unit of the British navy these vessels can be recalled by the Canadian government to form part of that navy, in which case of course they would be maintained by Canada and not by Great Britain." Sir Robert argued that any navy

THE ADMIRALTY'S APPROVAL

which Canada could create in a quarter or perhaps half a century would be a poor and weak substitute for "that splendid organization which the Empire already possesses and which has been evolved and built up through centuries of the most searching experience and of the highest endeavour." Anticipating a certain objection from the Opposition he contended that to build the vessels in Canada would increase the cost by \$12,000,000 while the inevitable delay would be a matter beyond estimate. As final evidence of British approval of the government's policy he emphasized the closing sentence of the Admiralty's memorandum: "The prime minister of the Dominion having inquired in what form any immediate aid that Canada might give would be most effective we have no hesitation in answering after a prolonged consideration of all the circumstances that it is desirable that such aid should include the provision of a certain number of the largest and strongest ships of war which science can build or money supply."

The Borden proposal was opposed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal party with such determination, energy and resource as have rarely been displayed in a political struggle in Canada. On December 12th, the Liberal leader submitted an amendment declaring that "any measure of Canadian aid to imperial navy defence which does not employ a permanent policy of participation by

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ships owned, manned, and maintained by Canada and contemplating construction as soon as possible in Canada is not an adequate or satisfactory expression of the aspirations of the Canadian people in regard to naval defence, and is not an assumption by Canada of her fair share in maintaining the naval strength of the Empire." The amendment expressed regret that no immediate action was to be taken to give effect to the resolution unanimously adopted by parliament in 1909 and further declared that to increase the power and mobility of the imperial navy by the addition by Canada under the Naval Service Act of 1910 of two fleet units to be stationed on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Canada respectively, rather than by a contribution of money or ships, was the policy best calculated to afford relief to the United Kingdom in respect of the burden of imperial naval defence and, in the words of the Admiralty memorandum to "restore greater freedom to the movements of the British squadrons in every sea and directly promote the security of the Dominions and that the Government of Canada should take such steps as would lead to the accomplishment of this purpose as speedily as possible."

There was consistency in Sir Wilfrid's position and if, as he firmly believed, there was no emergency in Europe there was strength in his argument. Moreover, he would have been more than

AN EMERGENCY DENIED

human if he had not resented the failure of the Conservative party to respect the common agreement to create a Canadian naval service and the dubious alliance of Conservatives and Nationalists to accomplish his defeat. It is the fact, however, that he made no advances to the Nationalists even to secure support against the Borden naval programme. Again and again there was the flavour of contempt in his references to the Nationalist members of the government and he greatly rejoiced at the equivocal position in which they found themselves over the proposal to contribute dreadnoughts to the Royal Navy. Sir Wilfrid argued that the memorandum of the Admiralty upon which the government relied to justify its policy showed conclusively that there was no emergency and that England was in no danger, whether imminent or prospective. Over and over again he committed himself to this position with the result that when the war came he was gravely embarrassed. If one feels that he should have had less confidence in Germany and clearer knowledge of the actual situation in Europe it has to be remembered that British statesmen with access to the Foreign Office and intimate continental connections professed as much confidence as did the Canadian Liberal leader that the peace of Europe would not be disturbed. Besides, war to Sir Wilfrid Laurier was a crime so wholly beyond understanding that he could not believe the Kaiser or

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his people would provoke a conflict for which he never could find any shadow of justification. On the other hand, Sir Robert Borden came back from London with the profound conviction that war was imminent and that immediate action by Canada would have a moral effect far beyond any strength the Canadian contribution would add to the Royal Navy. In purpose the two Canadian leaders were not divided, in conviction they were far apart. Sir Wilfrid confessed that "if there was an emergency, if England were in danger, no I will not use that expression; I will not say if England were in danger, but simply, if England were on trial with one or more of the great powers of Europe, my right honourable friend might come and ask, not \$35,000,000, but twice, three times, four times \$35,000,000. We would put at the disposal of England all the resources of Canada; there would not be a single dissentient voice." The explanation of the government's policy, he suggested, was that imperial defence had been made the subject of contentious politics. "It is the result of the alliance, the unholy alliance, which has been formed by the honourable gentlemen opposite." He said: "You give England two or three dreadnoughts, to be paid for by Canada but to be equipped, maintained and manned by England. I must qualify this statement. In justice to my right honourable friend I must qualify this statement; because he told us that he had

NO THOUGHT OF SEPARATION

secured from the imperial authorities the privilege of having Canadian officers serve on these ships. Oh, ye Tory jingoes, is that the amount of the sacrifice you are prepared to make! You are ready to furnish admirals, rear admirals, commodores, captains, officers of all grades, plumes, feathers and gold lace; but you leave it to England to supply the bone and sinews on board these ships. You say that these ships shall bear Canadian names. That will be the only thing Canadian about them. You hire somebody to do your work; in other words, you are ready to do anything except the fighting." He described the Borden policy as a hybrid policy, "a cross between jingoism and Nationalism." He refused to discuss the suggestion that a Canadian navy was a separatist navy. "He would not discuss any opinion he had held at twenty or even at forty." He had, he said, learned something from observation and experience. "Any thought of separation from Great Britain, if any such thought exists anywhere, and I do not believe it does, would be a folly and a crime." Canada would be at war when England was at war but, he insisted, she would herself decide as to whether her forces should take part in the conflict.

Sir Wilfrid doubted if it was practicable for Canada to have a voice in all questions affecting peace and war. The diplomatic relations of England were very minute, very serious and some-

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times must be carried on with great secrecy. "I understand that my right honourable friend proposes to the English Admiralty that there should be a representative of the Canadian government all the time in England to confer with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on all questions on which war may probably arise. If this is done for Canada it must be done for Australia, for New Zealand, for South Africa, and for Newfoundland; and I doubt very much if the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would receive much assistance from such a multitude of advisers." He would not, he said, condemn or approve the suggestion that Canada should be consulted in all negotiations between Great Britain and foreign countries but it "was opening a door to consequences which must be carefully considered before any action is taken." Concluding his speech in support of the amendment declaring for the construction of two fleet units Sir Wilfrid said: "My right honourable friend concluded the argumentative part of his speech with the statement that, in claiming for the overseas Dominions the power to have a voice in all questions of peace and war, he was inviting the attention of the statesmen of Great Britain 'to the real problem of imperial existence.' I think it would be difficult for my right honourable friend, or anybody else, to convince us that the existence of the British Empire rests upon so slender a thread.

THE BOND OF EMPIRE

We have been accustomed to believe, and we will continue to believe, that it rests upon a firmer basis. Sir, I am not indifferent—far from it—to anything that concerns the unity of the British Empire. This agglomeration of continents under the British Crown has something in it which strikes the imagination, something which has always had, at all events for me, a great attraction. But I have always believed, and will continue to believe, that the firm basis of the British Empire is, next to the British Crown, the local autonomy of the different dependencies; that is to say, their working out of their own destinies to the central end of the Empire. The Crown is the great bond, the cement, which binds together the scattered continents over the whole world. The Crown is a purely sentimental bond; but that bond, though purely sentimental, has proven itself to be equal to all occasions. I do not believe the Empire is in danger; I do not believe it can be cemented by the means suggested by my right honourable friend. I believe the relations of the different parts of the Empire to the mother country are not perfect, but that essentially they are perfectible. You can discuss problems of improvement; there is no occasion to discuss problems of existence.”¹

As has been said the Naval Aid bill was opposed by the Liberal parliamentary party with amazing

¹ Hansard, Vol. I, 1912-1913, page 1028.

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persistence and tenacity. There was no weapon in the armoury of obstruction that was not employed. The temper of the Opposition was peculiarly sullen and bitter. Once the House sat for ten days without rising. There was much of angry recrimination, derisive retort and premeditated insult. The leader in the sustained attack was Hon. William Pugsley, who represented St. John, and had held office as minister of public works in the Laurier administration. Bold, alert, untiring and audacious, there was no rule of parliament which he could not make serve his purpose nor any artifice of the defence which he could not overcome. He held his temper in complete control, was impervious to attack and manœuvred his forces with smiling serenity and incomparable dexterity. No such master of obstruction had ever before appeared in the Canadian parliament and there were times when even the exasperated ministerialists "could scarce forbear to cheer" their wily and resourceful antagonist. At last it became apparent that under the rules of parliament which had no provision for closure months must elapse before the Naval Aid bill could be advanced to its final stages. It was recognized, however, that unless some extraordinary expedient could be adopted any proposal to establish closure would be as desperately resisted as the Naval Aid bill and, indeed, would provide only fresh opportunities for obstruction. But by a bold manœuvre,

THE CLOSURE

through revision of the rules, the government reestablished its control over parliament. On April 9th, Sir Robert Borden moved a resolution in favour of such an amendment of the rules as would enable the government under defined conditions to restrict debate and compel a division. He was able to quote statements of Liberal ministers and Liberal newspapers when the trade agreement with Washington was before parliament suggesting the need of some system of closure in order to prevent deliberate obstruction and expedite public business. When the prime minister had moved the resolution Sir Wilfrid rose with the intention, it was believed, of moving the House into committee. Mr. Hazen, minister of marine, rose simultaneously with Sir Wilfrid and when the Speaker according to long established custom recognized the leader of the Opposition, W. B. Northrup, Conservative member for West Hastings rose also and moved, seconded by Richard Blain, member for Peel, that "the minister of marine and fisheries, being the member for the city and county of St. John, be now heard." The motion to hear Mr. Hazen was carried by 105 to 67 and then the motion by the prime minister that "the question be now put" was presented. This motion under the old rules limited every member to a single speech on the question and prevented further amendment. There were angry protests from the Liberal members,

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cries of "shame" and some moments of confusion and tumult. But the Conservatives by adroit strategy had secured the position of advantage and no protest availed to turn the government from its purpose.

Sir Wilfrid was vigorous in protest and denunciation. He denounced the "gag" of which he was the first victim and denied the charges of obstruction. "It is true," he said, "that we opposed the bill for naval aid. We did that with all the might at our command; we did it with all the means at our command under the rules of the House. Am I to be told that in the exercise of this power of strenuous opposition we did anything which is not in accordance with the best traditions of parliamentary government?" He contended that if any change in the rules was to be made there should first be free discussion in committee. He described the conduct of the prime minister as arbitrary and insisted that closure in the terms proposed would destroy reasonable freedom of debate. He added: "The poison that he offers us to-day will come to his own lips at some future day; we are in the minority; we can be gagged; we can be prevented from expressing our opinions; they can trample upon our rights. But, sir, the day of reckoning will come and it will come as soon as we have a dissolution of the present parliament." Mr. Hazen's motion was debated until April 23rd, when it was carried by

NAVAL AID BILL ADOPTED

108 to 73 and upon the same division Mr. Borden's resolution to contribute three dreadnoughts to the Royal Navy was adopted. The new rules provided that a minister could move closure after twenty-four hours' notice, that after notice no member could speak for more than twenty minutes, that on two days of the week amendments to supply need not be accepted and that the "previous question" should not be open to debate. In committee on the Naval Aid bill many amendments were offered and even under the new rules its passage was slow and difficult. But at last, on May 15th, the resolution which Sir Robert Borden had submitted to the Commons on December 5th was adopted by 101 to 68. Col. H. H. McLean, Liberal member for Albert, N.B., voted with the government and four Quebec Nationalists against.

The resources of the Opposition, however, were not exhausted. In the Senate there was a Liberal majority and it soon became manifest that this majority was belligerent and intractable. In the course to be taken by Sir George Ross there was acute interest. For many years he had been recognized as one of the most determined and aggressive of Liberal imperialists. He was, indeed, one of the "four Georges," of whom the other three were Dr. George M. Grant, Col. George T. Denison, and Dr. George R. Parkin. For many years minister of education in Ontario and later premier of the province, he was appointed to the

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Senate after his defeat in 1905 in the provincial general election. He and Sir Wilfrid had drifted apart, not in consequence of personal differences but over serious electoral irregularities in Ontario, the refusal of Sir George to resign office when it was apparent that he could retain power only by acquiescence in corrupt practices in the constituencies and because, as Sir Wilfrid believed, deliberate and immoral toleration of corruption in Ontario had injured the Liberal party all over the country. There was some surprise, therefore, that he was made Liberal leader in the Senate while the Naval Aid bill was making its slow and difficult progress through the House of Commons. But there was, no doubt, an understanding between Ross and Laurier before he was appointed. At any rate when the bill came before the Senate Ross argued that there was neither constitutional freedom nor authority for the government's proposal, derided the contribution as three empty shells to be maintained at the expense of British taxpayers, described Sir Robert Borden as a practical separatist whose policy would create friction and misunderstanding, and concluded with the flowing eloquence he always had at command: "This bill calls for money, not men, for models of steel and iron, not for models of courage and daring; it appeals to no man's flesh and blood; it offers no Victoria Crosses for lives rescued on the battlefield from the sabres of the enemy.

REJECTED BY THE SENATE

Empty as an exploded cartridge and soulless as its plated sides, it arouses no sympathy, no sentiment, no emotion of joy or glory." In amendment to the motion to approve the Naval Aid bill Sir George moved that: "This House is not justified in giving its assent to this bill until it is submitted to the country." The amendment was carried by fifty-one to twenty-seven and as amended sent back to the Commons where it was rejected.

For long there were echoes in the press and from the platform of a controversy as bitter and vengeful as any which had disturbed the country since confederation. Unfortunately, too, the memorandum from the Admiralty and a letter from Winston Churchill designed to show that the ships to be contributed by Canada could be constructed only at excessive cost in Canadian shipyards were interpreted as verging upon offensive interference in the domestic affairs of the Dominion. Perhaps if the arguments had been less convincing they would not have produced such extreme anger and resentment. The memoranda undoubtedly strengthened the position of the government but perhaps in proportionate degree whetted the determination of the Opposition to resist and obstruct. A section of Canadian opinion, even outside the extremists of the Nationalist faction, professed to discover evidences of Imperial dictation and pressure in the intervention of the Admiralty, solicited though it was by

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the Canadian government, and for a time the ghost of Downing Street became again a living figure in Canada. On the other hand the "loyalty" of the Liberal party was decried in familiar language and the Senate denounced as it is always denounced and threatened when it is not submissive to the House of Commons.

Throughout all these explosive incidents Sir Wilfrid bore himself with characteristic dignity and displayed the stubborn resolution which was of the very fibre of his character. It must be admitted, too, that he was singularly consistent, unwavering in his advocacy of a Canadian naval service, and faithfully hostile to any policy of contribution. He had the courage to appear before a great meeting in Toronto and unflinchingly maintain the position he had taken in parliament. There was a whisper that he would not be permitted to speak in Toronto but there was not an unfriendly interruption nor any manifestation of dissent or ill-will. There was something in Laurier which exacted courtesy and inspired respect even when he appeared before audiences which neither accepted his arguments nor shared his convictions. This was peculiarly and finely demonstrated at the meeting in Toronto. He still denied that there was any emergency which could not be met by "a perpetual policy." New conditions he admitted had caused Great Britain to withdraw her fleets from the North Sea. "Should

LAURIER'S DEFENCE

not we young nations of the Empire strengthen the motherland by replacing her overseas' fleets with squadrons built and manned by the young nations?" The naval policy of the Liberal party he declared: "Is built not upon the alleged decadence of Great Britain; it is based upon the broader principle of the development of the young daughter nations. Sir, Canada is no longer a colony in the ordinary sense of that word. Canada has passed from the state of being a colony to nationhood and passed without any change or break in her allegiance. The British Empire to-day is a galaxy of young nations, active, bright, enterprising and ardent. They must realize that nationhood carries with it more duty than the colonial state. They must realize that in being nations they must assume more obligations, and one of these obligations is the defence of our country; is defence in our waters by a fleet, built, I repeat, by Canadian labour as far as it can be done, and manned by Canadian men under the control and the responsibility of the Canadian government, of the Canadian parliament and of the Canadian people." Whatever judgments may be pronounced upon the policies of the leaders or the temper of the people the fact remains that through division there was inaction and failure and when the great test came no warship with a Canadian ensign moved upon the face of the waters.

In one other chapter, and that the most dramatic

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and momentous in Canadian history, Sir Wilfrid Laurier appears with courage undiminished and confidence unimpaired. In his course throughout the great war there is much to admire and perhaps something to deplore. We are still too near the events of those days for dispassionate judgment. There could, however, be no greater injustice than to suggest that the Liberal leader ever questioned the action of the government in committing Canada to participation in the conflict or ever thought that the country should relax its effort in the great cause for which Great Britain and France contended with such invincible resolve and amazing endurance. To the last he believed that Germany would not make war under a dynasty which he had come to regard as a bulwark of peace in Europe. But at worst, as has been said, he shared this delusion with British statesmen who had sources of information which he did not possess. Moreover, the faith which he so firmly cherished was held by the masses of the British people, ignorant as they should not have been of the extent of German preparation, and misled by official confidence at Westminster which it is now so difficult to understand. But Laurier when his faith was shattered and his dream dispelled was less hesitant than many British statesmen to meet the challenge of Germany with all the resources at the Empire's command.

In those hot days of August when parliament

NO DIVISION OF OPINION

met in special session to authorize the organization of an expeditionary force in Canada no man was under a greater strain of emotion than the leader of the Liberal party or more eager to assert the determination of the Canadian people to unite with the forces moving in France and Britain to the relief of Belgium and through Belgium to the defence of the free institutions of the French Republic and the British Empire. On August 11th, 1914, Sir Wilfrid issued a statement which gave definite and complete assurance that there would be no division of opinion in parliament. "We all hope and pray," he said, "that the effort of Sir Edward Grey may yet be successful in persuading the nations of the Continent to the restoration of peace. I confess that the prospects are very doubtful. It is probable and almost certain that England will have to share in the conflict not only for the protection of her own interests but for the protection of France and the higher civilization of which these two nations are to-day the noblest expression. The policy of the Liberal party under such circumstances is well known. I have often declared that if the mother country were ever in danger, or if danger ever threatened, Canada would render assistance to the fullest extent of her power. In view of the critical nature of the situation I have cancelled all my meetings. Pending such great questions there should be a truce to party strife."

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He reaffirmed this position in the debate on the address during the memorable four days' session of parliament called by the government for August 18th to vote war appropriations and pass various measures necessary "for the defence of Canada and for the maintenance of the honour and integrity of the Empire." The Liberal leader said that: "Speaking for those who sit around me, speaking for the wide constituencies which we represent in this House, I hasten to say that to all these measures we are prepared to give immediate assent." He added: "If in what has been done or what remains to be done there may be anything which in our judgment should not be done or should be differently done, we raise no question, we take no exception, we offer no criticism, and shall offer no criticism so long as there is danger at the front." He predicted that from the war the British Empire would emerge with a new bond of union, the pride of all its citizens and a living light to all other nations. "It will go down," he said, "on a still nobler page of history that England could have averted this war if she had been willing to forego the position which she has maintained for many centuries at the head of European civilization; if she had been willing to desert her allies, to sacrifice her obligations, to allow the German Emperor to bully heroic Belgium, to trample upon defenceless Luxembourg, to rush upon isolated France

ADMIRATION FOR ENGLAND

and to put his booted heel upon continental Europe. At that price England would have secured peace; but her answer to the German Emperor was: Your proposals are infamous. And rather than accept them, England has entered into this war; and there is not to-day all over the universe a British subject, there is not outside the Empire a single man, whose admiration for England is not greater by reason of this firm and noble attitude."

The truce, however, was not to be kept by the leaders of either party or the press of either party. Nothing is more certain than that wars breed waste and extravagance, provide opportunity for exploitation by mercenary interests, and practically compel the exercise of autocratic power by governments. Military considerations also require frequent changes of policy and resort to expedients for which there are no sanctions under a free constitution. Under such conditions a parliamentary Opposition, excluded from responsibility for public policy and departmental administration is more than human if it does not become restless and critical. From the first, too, it was apparent that a formidable section of the Conservative party was as hostile as in time of peace to any recognition of Liberals in public appointments or to any partnership in official patronage. There was, however, no distinction between Liberals and Conservatives in the response to the call for

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service or in the support accorded to recruiting agencies and military and patriotic objects. In the department of militia, under a bold, impulsive and sanguine minister, partisan considerations were measurably set aside and as soon as it became apparent that the war was to be of long duration there was a resolute effort to exclude any flavour of patronage in the distribution of contracts for munitions and supplies. Most valuable in this connection were the services of Sir Edward Kemp, chairman of the War Purchasing Commission, and great beyond computation those of Sir Joseph Flavelle, chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board, under whose direction hundreds of millions of dollars were expended in the purchase of shells and other war material produced in Canadian factories. There was, however, irritation over patronage as exercised by a party government and suspicions, charges and investigations which disturbed the country and to a degree impeded the prosecution of the war with full vigour and complete efficiency.

The parliamentary Opposition was also exasperated by the manifest desire of the government to order a general election. Twice, indeed, the cabinet definitely decided to dissolve but at the last moment abandoned the intention in consequence of protest from the people apparently so universal and energetic that to persist would have been flagrant defiance of public opinion.

A GENERAL ELECTION OPPOSED

Aside altogether from the fact that public opinion was shrewdly organized against the government by Liberal agencies which feared the result of an appeal to the country, the prospect of a party conflict while Canadian soldiers were dying in Europe was intolerable to thousands of patriotic Conservatives. In a speech at Toronto Sir Wilfrid Laurier declared that he could have no desire to "open the door of office with a blood-rusted key." He said again: "There is after all a greater issue at the present hour which dominates all party contingencies, an issue which should unite the best efforts of all races, creeds and parties. Our task demands all the energies of a united Canada. It is not a question of ballots but a question of bullets. It is not returning officers that we want; it is recruiting officers."

But there was no general election. The government had the will but not the courage. It may be that those who opposed a contest were the sounder patriots and the wiser imperialists. On the other hand, if the government had been sustained in a general election there would have been no coalition, probably there would have been no conscription with its legacy of division and misunderstanding and conceivably to-day there would be a greater unity of sentiment and interest in Canada. One recalls a speech by Lincoln, in 1864, at a congratulatory demonstration over his reelection to the presidency. "It has long been,"

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he said, "a grave question whether any government, not too strong for the liberties of its people, can be strong enough to maintain its existence in great emergencies. On this point the present rebellion brought our republic to a severe test, and a presidential election, occurring in regular course during the rebellion, added not a little to the strain. If the loyal people united were put to the utmost of their strength by the rebellion, must they not fail when divided and partially paralyzed by a political war among themselves. But the election was a necessity. We cannot have free government without elections; and if the rebellion could force us to forego or postpone a national election, it might claim to have already conquered and ruined us." During the war the life of the Canadian parliament was twice extended by consent of the Opposition. There was, however, something of humiliation in a situation which left the power to dissolve in the hands of the Opposition and through which the initiative of ministers was weakened and the authority of the cabinet vitally diminished.

Those who opposed an election were also the leaders in the movement for a union government and compulsory military service. As the war wore on it became ever more difficult to secure recruits by the voluntary method. Various devices were adopted to stimulate recruiting and to organize more effectively the manhood and resources of

CONSCRIPTION

the country for production at home and strength overseas. There were results, but often the effort was greater than the achievement. In the end methods were employed to secure recruits for the expeditionary army which excited derision and threatened to become a scandal. It will be remembered that in Canada as during the first years of the war in Great Britain the political leaders had pledged themselves not to resort to conscription. Sir Robert Borden was as deeply committed to the voluntary system as was Sir Wilfrid Laurier and as were the British political leaders when the duration of the war was not foreseen and the exertions and sacrifices necessary to achieve victory were so greatly underestimated. Furthermore, when the United States entered the war, profiting by the experience of Great Britain, conscription was applied and enforced with no such unhappy incidents as attended the effort of Lincoln to secure reinforcements for the northern armies by compulsion. It does not need to be said that when the war began any attempt to conscript either in Great Britain or in Canada would have produced confusion and disaster. But the time came when the United Kingdom had no alternative and the same need for reinforcements for the decimated Canadian army in France and Flanders convinced a great section of the people that there was no alternative for Canada.

It was held, however, by the leaders of the agi-

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tation in the press and on the platform that an essential condition of success was a coalition government representing both the old political parties and the organized Grain Growers who had appeared as a separate and independent political party in the prairie provinces. From the first the movement was resisted by Sir Wilfrid Laurier as involving the disruption of the Liberal party and as designed to impose upon the country a policy to which he was irrevocably opposed. Sir Robert Borden was less hostile, but there was division in the cabinet which hampered his freedom of action. There was also a feeling among Liberals, frankly expressed by a Liberal convention at Winnipeg, that no coalition could be established under Borden's leadership. Time, therefore, was required to discover that the Conservative parliamentary party would not sanction a coalition unless Borden were retained as prime minister and that no other name advanced by the advocates of coalition had in equal degree the confidence of the people. When at last Sir Robert Borden was persuaded that a coalition was essential to effective prosecution of the war and the application of conscription he induced the cabinet to accept his decision and at once made direct advances to the leader of the Liberal party. The prime minister suggested that a Union government should be organized with an equal representation of both parties and with compulsory

LAURIER AGAINST COALITION

military service as the chief feature of its policy. The first proposal was that parliament should enforce conscription without appeal to the people but later Borden agreed to delay conscription until the judgment of the country could be expressed in a general election. There is reason to believe that Borden was willing to have Laurier choose the Liberal members of a Union cabinet, and to pledge himself that no Conservative would be admitted to the cabinet without Laurier's approval. Sir Wilfrid, however, refused to enter a coalition if that involved acceptance of conscription. Probably he would not have entertained the premier's proposal even if compulsory service had not been made the condition of acceptance. It has been said that he would have accepted office in a Union government when the war began but no such thought was then in the minds of the Conservative leaders and possibly in the first months of the war neither party in parliament could have been induced to consider a coalition. In a letter to Hon. N. W. Rowell, Liberal leader for Ontario (June 3rd, 1917), Sir Wilfrid said: "I wholly agree that in a struggle such as the present one we must be prepared to give up the normal party divisions. Indeed, so much do I believe in this, that I am quite prepared to see my friends take a different attitude from my own, and support conscription whilst I will oppose it. The only solution it seems to me is this:—have

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an appeal to the people, have it right away, either in the form of a referendum or an election. Let the people decide, and if they decide in favour of conscription, as it seems to me they will, under present circumstances, from the attitude of our friends in Ontario, whatever influence I may have will be employed in pleading to the Quebec people that the question is settled by the verdict of the majority, and that all must loyally accept the issue and submit to the law, and this will be no light task, but a task to which I will devote myself with all my energy."¹

In advance of coalition (June 11th, 1917), Sir Robert Borden introduced in parliament the Military Service Act providing for conscription with stipulated exemption for those engaged in war occupations, those who would suffer serious hardships if compelled to enroll, and those whose conscientious objections forbade military service. Sir Wilfrid offered an amendment to delay consideration of the measure until the judgment of the people was obtained through a referendum. Not only was the amendment rejected but more than a score of Liberals from the English provinces, for years among the most devoted of Laurier's followers, spoke and voted for conscription. As an offset he had the support of two Conservatives and nine Nationalists from Quebec. On

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier," by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 516.

PARLIAMENT ORDERS CONSCRIPTION

July 24th, by a vote of 102 to 44, the third reading of the bill was carried. The debate which had this unhappy result for the Liberal leader strengthened the movement for conscription. But not all of those who gave their support to conscription were ready to pledge themselves to a coalition or enter a Union government. For weeks the movement for coalition dragged heavily. Time and again it seemed certain that success could never be achieved. There is no doubt that Sir Wilfrid exerted all his influence to prevent coalition and hold in allegiance to himself those leaders of the Liberal party in the English provinces without whose coöperation no Union government could be organized of such strength and distinction as the country demanded. Dr. Skelton suggests that "railway financiers and speculators fishing in troubled waters" were influential in the agitation for coalition. In a private letter to Mr. Rowell the Liberal leader himself said: "I have evidence coming to me every day that certain railway interests are actively at work amongst our friends still with a view of forming a coalition. Such sinister influences are not calculated to impress one favourably. Anything which is not done openly always seems to me dangerous."¹ It is, however, impossible to doubt that the dominant sentiment of the country was expressed in the demand for coalition.

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier," by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 522.

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Three considerations gave strength to the movement. (1) A common conviction in the English provinces that only by conscription could the army overseas be reinforced, (2) a great weariness of partisan contention and conflict, and (3) dissatisfaction with the response of Quebec to the call to service and the effort to which Sir Wilfrid himself gave support to revive and accentuate in the crisis of the war the demand for greater recognition of the French language in the schools of Ontario. All these considerations, whether or not they were legitimate and valid, assisted the movement for coalition and affected the attitude of Liberals to whom Sir Robert Borden made his appeal for coöperation and equal partnership in a national cabinet. The prime minister was singularly patient and resolute. Depreciation of his character and capacity by opponents whose coöperation he was seeking he bore without irritation or resentment. He was unaffected by the attitude of those within his own party who hoped that he would fail in the difficult task to which he had set himself. Among Liberals, if he could still be called a Liberal, Sir Clifford Sifton alone gave earnest and continuous support to the movement for coalition, not out of any exceptional regard for the prime minister, but because he was profoundly convinced that the situation demanded a national government representing all parties, sections and interests. If at length

THE UNION CABINET

such a government was organized to Borden and Sifton the credit chiefly belongs. In the Union cabinet the Liberal group in the House of Commons was represented by Hugh Guthrie of Ontario, A. K. Maclean of Nova Scotia, and F. B. Carvell of New Brunswick. Other Liberal ministers from Ontario were N. W. Rowell, Liberal leader in the provincial legislature, Major-General S. C. Mewburn, and G. D. Robertson, who sat in the Senate as a representative of Labour. Alberta was represented by A. L. Sifton, who had been premier and chief justice of the province; Saskatchewan by J. A. Calder, a member of the provincial Liberal cabinet; Manitoba by T. A. Crerar, the leader of the organized Grain Growers; and Quebec by C. C. Ballantyne. No French Liberal could be induced to accept office. Although only three conscriptionist Liberals in the House of Commons entered the Union cabinet, and no greater evidence of the personal influence of Laurier could be afforded, the western ministers carried a great section of Liberals and farmers over to the coalition while in Ontario Mr. Rowell brought a material accession of support. The truth is that Liberal newspapers such as the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Toronto Daily Star* and leaders of the Liberal party outside the House of Commons were signally influential in creating the public opinion which was expressed in the adoption of conscription and the organization of a

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Union government, and yet upon the Conservative party has been poured out all the wrath of those who opposed conscription and coalition.

On December 17th, 1917, the Union government made its appeal to the constituencies. Before parliament was prorogued, however, the War Times Election Act was passed which disfranchised Germans, Austrians and all other Europeans whose mother tongue was German who had become naturalized in Canada since 1902, provided machinery for taking the votes of soldiers overseas, and gave the franchise to the wives, mothers and sisters of soldiers. This Act Sir Wilfrid in his address to the electors sternly denounced. "It takes away," he said, "the franchise from men whom we invited to this country, to whom we promised all the rights and privileges of our citizenship, who trusted in our promises and who became under our laws British subjects and Canadian citizens." He complained also that the Act gave the franchise to some women and denied it to others. "All those whose privilege it is to have near relatives amongst the soldiers will be voters. The right will be refused to all those not so privileged though their hearts are just as strong in the cause, and though they have worked incessantly for it. Moreover, in five provinces of the Dominion, namely Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, women have been admitted to the franchise. According to the terms

ARGUMENT AGAINST COERCION

of the Dominion law, which no sophistry can blur, being electors in the provinces women are electors in the Dominion. The Act of last session snatches away that right from them. The Act is vicious in principle and is equally vicious in its enacting dispositions." It had for its object and for its effect, he declared, the desire to discourage and to stifle the free expression of the will of the people and to make parliamentary government a mere name without the reality. To force conscription upon the people against repeated assurances to the contrary was neither wise, prudent, nor effective. "It may bring men to the ranks but it will not infuse into the whole body of the nation that spirit of enthusiasm and determination which is more than half the battle. It will create and intensify division where unity of purpose is essential. I am only too well aware that the views which I here present have not met with universal acceptance even in the party to which I belong, but even yet I hold that to coerce when persuasion has not been attempted is not sound policy, and in this I appeal to the impartial judgment of all Canadians."

But while Laurier opposed conscription there is not a sentence in his speeches which suggests that the war effort of Canada should be slackened. He was as eager as the Unionists to have the decimated regiments of the expeditionary army reinforced and was intolerant of any proposal to

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make peace until the forces of autocracy were decisively defeated. He felt keenly the desertion of so many Liberals who had fought by his side through years of political adversity and who had enjoyed a long period of office under his leadership. More than once he expressed a desire to resign the leadership, but he had such joy in battle and such confidence in his own generalship that it is doubtful if he ever intended to have his resignation accepted. It never was actually offered and assuredly never would have been accepted save perhaps during the acute crisis over the organization of the Union government.¹

¹ In Dr. Skelton's "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier" (Vol. II, page 483), there is this reference to the relations between Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his followers in parliament during the session of 1915, just after the rejection of Mr. Lapointe's resolution demanding greater consideration for the French language in Ontario: "In letters to his friends he had more than once declared that the hesitation of the party to follow his lead was proof that he should have insisted upon his resignation being accepted when last he proffered it. Now the question had been put to the proof. During the debate the Liberal members had met in caucus by provinces. Senator Dandurand brought to him in his office their report; the Quebec and Maritime-province members were all supporting; the western members opposing; the Ontario men, while in sympathy with the aim of the motion, doubted its expediency, but they would vote for it if Sir Wilfrid so desired them. 'No', he replied, 'I shall not ask them; they should not expect that after all these years.' He walked to the window, stood looking out in silence for a few minutes, and then came back to his desk. 'I have lived too long, I have out-lived Liberalism. The forces of prejudice in Ontario have been too much for my friends. It was a mistake for a French Roman Catholic to take the leadership. I told Blake so thirty years ago.'... 'Yes, but those thirty years....' He was silent again and then scribbled a few lines: 'I am resigning and shall announce my resignation in the House this afternoon. Please give this to George.' Senator Dandurand

RECRUITING IN QUEBEC

There was an intense desire among a multitude of Liberals that he should support conscription, and he was subjected to continuous and determined pressure, but many of those who applied the pressure and deplored his attitude followed him to defeat with unflinching devotion. Sir Wilfrid believed that if he accepted conscription Mr. Bourassa would become master of Quebec and aside from the personal humiliation this would involve he could see nothing but ill fortune for Canada in Nationalist control over the French province. In private letters he expressed dissatisfaction with recruiting in Quebec and he had the courage in public speeches to urge a freer enlistment. But there was something in his contention that recruiting in Quebec was sadly mismanaged by the government and that the old alliance, or at least the practical coöperation, between Conservatives and Nationalists against his naval policy had created conditions and stimulated influences which could not be controlled.

In a letter to the late M. K. Cowan, K.C., (March, 1916) Laurier said: "I come now to what you say about recruiting and the slackness of Quebec in that respect. On this point the last

took the letter to George Graham. Immediately the Ontario Liberals assembled. They had not realized that 'the Old Man' took it so much to heart. At once they sent word that they would support the motion, and urgently requested him to withdraw his resignation. He was deeply moved by their warm expressions of confidence, and agreed to continue."

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word has not been said and the last bit of information has not been received. There are some factors to be taken into account in the comparison of recruiting between Quebec and Ontario. Recruiting has been chiefly confined all over Canada to urban population, very little in rural population. When we deduct from the figures in Ontario the British-born, the urban population, and compare only the figures in rural districts, the difference will not be very great, though I admit that the preponderance is in favour of Ontario. Before I go further let me remind you that Ontario is dotted with towns and cities from 5,000 to 500,000. In Quebec we have only one large city, Montreal, then a secondary city, Quebec, with not even 100,000, and the next three cities, St. Hyacinthe, Sherbrooke, and Three Rivers, do not count each a population of 20,000. Apart from this, we have nothing but villages and a purely rural population. This is a condition of things which must be taken into consideration. Next, the great factor against recruiting has been the Nationalist movement, which was coddled by the Conservatives when we were in office, and which is still strong and powerful.”¹

Whether or not Sir Wilfrid ever intended to resign the leadership of the Liberal party, there

¹ “Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier,” by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, pages 459-460.

LAURIER IN THE WEST

was no hesitation after the formation of the Union government. Despite ill-health he gave himself to the contest with such vigour as remained. In a letter to D. D. Mackenzie (October 13th, 1917) he had said: "The formation of the Union government, so called, has confirmed me in this view; and now I am in the fight to face a murderous winter election, even if I die for it. This is not the time to desert the ship."¹ During the progress of the election he made only two or three speeches in the older provinces. He knew that he would lose heavily in Ontario, that he would hold Quebec, and perhaps suffer reverses in the Atlantic provinces. To the last, however, he cherished the hope of substantial support in the western country, and believed there was a fair prospect that the government would be defeated. To the west, therefore, he made his appeal in a series of speeches as remarkable for courage, eloquence and emotional force as any he had ever delivered. He crossed from Winnipeg to Vancouver, speaking in all the chief cities to crowded meetings, sympathetic, responsive and apparently convinced. The journey was a triumphal progress. There were continual manifestations of respect and affection. It was impossible to believe that upon the issue which he presented an adverse judgment could be pronounced. But

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier," by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 532.

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the respect and affection for Laurier which the west so freely and graciously expressed was no index to the deeper temper of the people. In all the west only two Liberal members survived the polling. Only eight Liberal members were returned from Ontario. In the Atlantic provinces ten Liberals were elected as against twenty-one Unionists. In Quebec, however, only three Unionists were returned. The Unionist majority of seventy-one unquestionably represented the dominant sentiment of the English provinces, but the price of conscription was the alienation of Quebec from the rest of Canada and one cannot read the literature of the contest without regret and misgiving. It may be that Quebec deliberately chose its position of isolation, but arguments were employed in behalf of the Unionists which a soberer judgment condemns and deplores. But we have a revelation of human nature, "red in tooth and claw," in every great political contest. Unfortunately, too, the wilder utterances of a free press and a free platform are not forgotten when "the tumult and the shouting" have ceased. Under the emotion of war prejudices are inflamed and passions excited, and that country is fortunate which goes through the ordeal without a legacy of bitter memories and lasting resentments. When the armistice came there were "two nations warring in the bosom of a single State" in Canada and there was little if any of that

WOMEN AND PARSONS

happy understanding and coöperation between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians of which there was such fair promise when Britain was making the great decision to stand with France and Belgium against an arrogant Germany and a compliant Austria.

Sir Wilfrid never ceased to contend that conscription was forced upon an unwilling people. "By this," he said in a letter of January 18th, 1918, "I do not mean the French-Canadians alone." He recalled the fact that: "In Quebec public opinion had been created by the alliance of the Nationalists and jingoes in the election of 1911 when, as you remember, the Nationalists carried on a campaign upon the cry that under no circumstances should Canada participate in the wars of Great Britain." He said further: "You will find when the war is over that it will be difficult to undo the mischief which has been done. It would have been far easier to have the men by voluntary enlistment, if the government had applied itself to the task with some judgment."¹ In another letter he declared that he was not surprised at the result in Ontario. "What the press failed to achieve the women and parsons completed." It had been his lot, he said, to run the whole gamut of prejudices in Canada. "In 1896 I was excommunicated by the Roman priests

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier," by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 545.

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and in 1917 by Protestant parsons."¹ But, while he continued to denounce conscription and the War Times Election Act, neither in his private letters nor in his public speeches did he ever suggest that the exertions and sacrifices of Canada in the war were greater than she should have been asked to make or that proposals of peace should be entertained until a complete victory was achieved.

When the new parliament assembled in 1918, he wrote to a friend in Ontario: "The session opened as satisfactorily as we of the Opposition could desire. In the House the few of us Liberals who have survived are all united. We have no ambition to defeat, even to harass the government. Quite the reverse. Our only aim is to help and assist." The treasury benches, he said, had become convinced that conscription was a failure. "Coercion will not produce the results which its authors anticipated." There were, he argued, strong reasons for believing that the government would quietly let the Act pass into oblivion. "But the blind, the fools and the miscreants who coerced the government to coerce still hold the whip over their heads. And now the hand of the blind, the fools and the miscreants is being strengthened by those other blind, fools and miscreants who at this moment are stirring up the

¹ "Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier," by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 544.



LAURIER HOUSE, OTTAWA

A RIOT IN QUEBEC

people of Quebec to violence and riot.”¹ A draft riot in Quebec in March, 1918, in which four civilians were killed and property and official documents destroyed, gave Laurier great concern, but even though many of the rioters belonged to his old constituency he insisted that “violence must be put down and obedience to the law maintained.” He confessed that he was much alarmed at the situation in Quebec, but as it turned out there was no general resistance to conscription nor any further disorder. At worst, he said, our troubles were nothing while “the situation in Europe is alarming almost to heart-breaking. For the moment the German offensive seems to be arrested. We are thankful, not that we won, but that we did not lose more. Yet I see no alternative. The fight must go on. Peace to-day would be a German peace and after the experience of Russia we know what a German peace means.”²

The parliamentary session of 1918 was the last in which Sir Wilfrid Laurier appeared. Although for two or three years his health had been failing he still seemed to have a reserve of physical strength, a mind alert and vigorous, an interest in affairs fresh and eager, and a temper buoyant

¹ “Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier,” by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 547.

² “Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier,” by Dr. Skelton, Vol. II, page 548.

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and confident. But it was toward evening and the day was far spent. On February 15th, he had a stroke of paralysis and he passed away two days later. He died as he had lived with serenity and dignity. He had often said that he could think of nothing more pitiful than an old age encumbered by physical debility and turning towards mental decay. When he was spared that a prayer was answered. Among the public men who have served Canada since confederation only the death of Sir John Macdonald produced such a universal manifestation of sorrow and affection.

CHAPTER XXX

THE MAN AND HIS METHODS

SIR WILFRID LAURIER'S opponents were slow to understand that he could be resolute and even ruthless. He was tolerant of differences of opinion within the cabinet so long as there was no flavour of disloyalty. During his first years of office it was the fashion to describe one or other of his colleagues as "the master of the administration." If it was not Blair it was Tarte, if it was not Tarte it was Sifton. But when all three disappeared from the cabinet the master was revealed. Mr. Tarte who was often indiscreet finally became presumptuous. He never forgot that he was among the leaders in the *Bleu* attack upon Drummond and Arthabaska when Laurier sought re-election after admission to the Mackenzie cabinet nor ever ceased to believe that he was the chief instrument in the young minister's defeat. Always a protectionist he conceived the notion that he could bring the mass of Conservative protectionists to the support of the government and could impose upon Laurier his own conception of fiscal policy. There is reason to think he even cherished the hope that he could succeed Sir Wilfrid as leader of the government. Sir Wilfrid was at an

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imperial conference in England in the summer of 1902 when Mr. Tarte began his series of protectionist speeches. While there Laurier was stricken by illness so serious that alarming reports came back to Canada. He doubted himself if his health would ever be fully restored. There never was any prospect that Mr. Tarte could become leader of the Liberal party even if Laurier had been obliged to resign, but he was ever bold and confident and was stimulated as with the taste of old wine by the cheers of the protectionists. He was even rash enough to recall 1878 and to suggest that if his fiscal policy was not accepted by the government its defeat by an overwhelming majority was inevitable. On October 18th Laurier reached Ottawa from England and two days later he had Mr. Tarte's resignation.

The rejected minister in his letter of resignation said: "Entertaining the opinion that the interests of the Canadian people make it our duty to revise, without delay, the tariff of 1897 with the view of giving a more adequate protection to our industries, to our farming community, to our workingmen, I cannot possibly remain silent. I prefer my freedom of action and of speech, under the circumstances, even to the great honour of being your colleague." Laurier declined "to discuss, at this moment, the economic theory of which you have made yourself the champion," but he pointed out to Mr. Tarte that "to advo-

FEARS NOT REALIZED

cate a policy which has not yet been accepted by the government, was an impediment to the proper working of our constitutional system and implied a disregard for that loyalty which all those who are members of the same administration owe to each other and have a right to expect from each other." There was acute apprehension among thousands of Liberals that the removal of Mr. Tarte would damage the administration in many industrial constituencies and be peculiarly destructive in Quebec. But separated from Laurier the power of Tarte to make mischief was inconsiderable if, indeed, he ever sought to make mischief for the leader by whom he had been dethroned. He returned to journalism but thereafter was comparatively uninfluential. There was lack of the old vigour in his writing. There was no restoration of political authority. Only a few years of life remained and it may be that failing health was the explanation of his quiet submission to the change of fortune which followed his withdrawal from the cabinet.

As so often happened with Laurier political separation was not followed by complete personal estrangement. The Liberal leader neither cherished resentments nor pursued vendettas. The social relation between Mr. Blair and himself survived the severance of official relations and between Sifton and himself for years after the official connection was broken there was mutual

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friendship and frequent coöperation for public objects. Other ministers by timely suggestion or by firm compulsion disappeared from the cabinet, but there was never an open quarrel nor so far as was ever revealed any enduring resentment. Laurier seemed to hold by the attraction of his personality all those who had once possessed his friendship and confidence. There is reason to believe that the cherished desire of Sir William Mulock to bring the telegraph and telephone systems under control of the postmaster-general failed of fruition only because the objection of Laurier could not be overcome but the intimate personal relation between the two never was disturbed. Projects of "public ownership" Sir Wilfrid always regarded with suspicion as he distrusted all sumptuary legislation and all doubtful intrusion of the State into the realms of finance, commerce, and industry.

In the controversies which arose over the attempts of Lord Dundonald and Major-General Hutton to exercise a degree of independent authority over the militia Laurier was as resolute as in his dealing with ministerial colleagues. General Hutton was too frank in newspaper interviews and public speeches and not always guarded in private conversation. There is no doubt that he deliberately set himself to create opinion in favour of the organization of Canadian contingents for service against the Boers in South Africa and was

MINTO AND HUTTON

perhaps too eager to discover evidences of political influence in the administration of the militia. Between himself and Dr. Borden, minister of militia, an honour graduate from the school of patronage, neither satisfactory official nor good personal relations could be maintained. Sir Wilfrid and the cabinet stood firmly behind the minister; Lord Minto, the Governor-General, gave his support to General Hutton. The General's defence suggests that he was lacking in prudence and too contemptuous in his attitude towards the government. "I plead guilty," he said, "only to having roused the latent military enthusiasm through all ranks of the militia, and having strengthened the innate feeling of patriotism towards the old country and the Empire, which already existed in all parts of the Dominion." It may be submitted, however, that it was not the duty of the British officer commanding the Canadian militia to "arouse latent military enthusiasm" in order to coerce the Canadian government and force a decision for which the government alone must take the responsibility before the people. There was some justification for Sir Wilfrid's answer that he "could see little difference between inculcating patriotism and arousing military enthusiasm and party politics." Sir Wilfrid intimated to the Governor-General that he must ask for Hutton's recall and when Lord Minto suggested that in transmitting the request to the

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Home government he would feel obliged to state strongly his own opinion the premier declared that if he adhered to that position he might compel the resignation of the government. Eventually General Hutton was recalled and Lord Minto submitted. The Governor-General in a letter to Mr. Chamberlain explained that "anything like an attempt to overpress the government to retain him would in all probability be taken as unjustifiable imperial pressure and be resisted accordingly." He said further: "It also appeared to me that, considering the manner in which other generals have disappeared from Canada with no apparent reason placed before the public, it was right that my government should accept the official responsibility for their general's removal."¹ The incident was only a passing cloud between Laurier and the Governor-General. Indeed, Lord Minto believed that dismissal of General Hutton could have been averted if the mutinous figure of the minister of militia had not stood at the premier's elbow.

It should not be forgotten that those were days of trial for the Canadian government. For some anxious weeks it was doubtful if soldiers from Canada would be permitted to join those of Australia and New Zealand in South Africa. Sir Wilfrid, fortified by the example of Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper, was unwilling to

¹ "Lord Minto, a Memoir," by John Buchan, pages 145-148.

A DIFFICULT POSITION

admit that any obligation rested upon the Dominion to engage in a war of the Empire in which she had no direct interest and for which she had no direct responsibility. Public opinion was flogged into passion by his political opponents and there was pressure for action by many Liberals in the English provinces. In Quebec, however, there was not only little support for a military adventure in South Africa but Mr. Bourassa was using his talent for agitation to excite public feeling against any participation by Canada in the conflict. With friction in the cabinet, dissent in Quebec, and symptoms of anger in the English provinces Laurier was in a difficult position and in the mood to resent any pressure from the Governor-General. All this Lord Minto understood and for the most part he maintained a strictly constitutional attitude. For a time, indeed, he was in passive sympathy with that considerable element in Great Britain which regarded the Boers as the victims of an unjust attack and imperial ministers as misled by a group of mercenary capitalists at Johannesburg. Notwithstanding these doubts and suspicions, however, there was nothing neutral in his position once war was declared. He was, indeed, frankly anxious as the representative of the Crown in Canada that Canadian regiments should march with the army of the Empire in South Africa. But he made no attempt to apply coercion. If the government had finally decided

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against contingents he would not have challenged the decision. Nothing could be more untrue than the report which even Hon. L. O. David, who was Laurier's close friend for half a century, seems to have accepted as credible that the Governor-General would have demanded the resignation of the government if there had been a final refusal to sanction the organization of contingents for South Africa.¹ If in a single unguarded moment Lord Minto hinted that the people themselves had determined what should be the policy of the government the indiscretion was overlooked by the prime minister as an accidental oratorical lapse rather than a deliberate or premeditated reflection upon the course which his official advisers had pursued.

Friction arose later, and again over the intrusion of political patronage into the administration of the militia, between the government and Lord Dundonald, who after an interval had succeeded

¹ In a letter to the *Montreal Daily Star*, December 19th, 1924, Senator David said: "I regret that your correspondent did not see the correction which I made of that assertion in the *Devoir*. I said that it was at the time the impression of important members of the Liberal party, that Laurier would have been probably dismissed if he had refused at least to resign or to call parliament. They drew that conclusion from the following remark made by Laurier: '*Il fallait se soumettre ou se démettre*,' which words may be translated as follows: 'I was obliged to resign or to assent.' It was the only remark which I heard him make when questioned about what had taken place between him and the Governor-General. But it appeared sufficient to confirm the opinion of those who thought and said that he would have been dismissed if he had refused to do what is said above."

“POLITICAL INTERFERENCE”

General Hutton as commander of the Canadian forces. Dissatisfied with the militia estimates, displeased by the refusal of the government to sanction fortifications along the United States border, exasperated by petty differences with Dr. Borden, and incensed by the action of Hon. Sydney Fisher, who while temporarily acting as minister of militia removed the name of a prominent Conservative politician from the list of officers submitted for a new regiment in process of organization in the eastern townships of Quebec, Dundonald in a public address at Montreal denounced Fisher's action as “a gross instance of political interference,” and declared he was profoundly anxious, not so much on personal as on national grounds, that the militia of Canada should be kept free from party politics. Mr. Fisher, in justification of what he had done, alleged that he had not cancelled the Conservative appointment for partisan reasons but in order to defeat an attempt to “turn the regiment into a political Tory organization.” Sir Wilfrid and other ministers gave wholehearted support to Mr. Fisher and as heartily condemned the indiscretion of Lord Dundonald. “We are not,” said Sir Wilfrid, “accustomed to being dragooned in this country. Lord Dundonald, with all the respect I have for him, must learn that this is a responsible government.” He said again: “So long as there is a Liberal government in Canada the civil power shall rule the military.”

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The order-in-council dismissing Lord Dundonald was signed without protest by the Governor-General although he had the temerity to suggest that Fisher should also be removed from office. There was not, as certain writers have alleged, any "crisis" in the relations between Lord Minto and the prime minister over Dundonald's removal. They agreed that the offence of the general officer commanding could not be overlooked; they were as far apart as ever in their attitude towards the minister of militia and the abuses of patronage of which he had been plainly convicted. The champions of Dundonald severely condemned Minto for signing the order of dismissal but he gave his signature without hesitation and with a clear conviction that no other course was open to himself or the government. In a private memorandum quoted by John Buchan he said: "I entirely agree with my government as to the immediate necessity of Dundonald's dismissal. As to their support of Fisher I entirely disagree with them; but surely the question as to whether public departments are to be run on political lines is not one to be settled by the Governor-General but by the Dominion parliament and the people of Canada. . . . I don't care a damn what anyone says and have not a shadow of doubt this is right."¹

Sir Wilfrid Laurier had a large toleration for patronage. When eager civil service reformers

¹ "Lord Minto, a Memoir," by John Buchan, page 151.

VALUE OF PATRONAGE

confessed their desire to relieve him of the "incubus of patronage" there crept into his eyes a look of humorous wisdom which would have cooled their ardour if they had understood all its significance. He believed there was far more of gain than of loss to governments and parties through control over appointments to office and distribution of public contracts. He knew that "funds" were necessary to organize constituencies and carry elections and seldom was anxious to discover the sources of the contributions. There never was in Canada a more flagrant misuse of public works and public appropriations to influence constituencies than in the general election of 1908, but Laurier was acquiescent. He loved power as dearly as ever did Sir John Macdonald and one doubts if in use of the means to hold power he was more scrupulous than the Conservative leader of whose methods he had exact knowledge and upon whose career his own, to a degree, was fashioned. But, notwithstanding his general attitude towards patronage, the first great step towards elimination of partisan considerations in appointments to the Civil Service was taken under his last administration when the inside Service was brought under the competitive system. It is true, also that as he grew older he became less tolerant of looseness in the departments and more concerned to restrain the agencies of electoral corruption. It must be remem-

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bered, also, that he broke down the old system of "gerrymandering" in the redistribution of constituencies and did a great deal to rescue the social and official life of the capital from the temper of civil war which prevailed during the first quarter century of confederation.

Like Sir John Macdonald, Laurier could set old personal and political quarrels aside when opportunity offered to strengthen his position by new alliances. This was illustrated in his decision to give office to D'Alton McCarthy and in his desire to reappoint Hon. J. A. Chapleau as lieutenant-governor of Quebec if not to give him a seat in the cabinet. Among a section of Quebec Liberals, however, he faced a resistance to recognition of Mr. Chapleau so formidable that he dared not give effect to his intention. He did not even persist in the desire to give Chapleau a second term as lieutenant-governor. He quelled the revolt by certain judicial appointments, which perhaps had been too long delayed, but he never ceased to regret his failure to establish a political partnership with the *Bleu* leader who more than any other of his old antagonists had disputed his title to ascendancy among his compatriots. It may be that if Chapleau had been granted a longer lease of life Laurier would have found a way and a time to give effect to his desire. The Liberal leader never found it easy to submit to defeat when he was clear that his strategy was sound; and particu-

THE ALASKAN BOUNDARY AWARD

larly upon an issue which affected his own province and his own people. As a foil to Bourassa the old idol of the *Bleus* would have been an invaluable ally in Quebec and he had powers which even Laurier did not possess to control the emotions and subdue the passions which were set aflame by the Nationalist agitation.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier could show prudence and restraint in any controversy in which vital national and imperial interests were involved. He could resist and reject the proposals of British ministers to establish consultative councils and otherwise to involve Canada in fixed obligations which he believed would infringe upon the authority of the Canadian parliament or create division among sections of the Canadian people. But it was seldom that he sought for political advantage by sustained attack upon the motives or policies of the Imperial government. If he could not accept all the proposals advanced by eager constitutionalists to "consolidate the Empire" he was always reluctant to sanction agitations which tended to divide the Empire. There is no better illustration of his prudence and restraint than his dealing with the award of the Alaskan boundary tribunal. He had an opportunity to excite all the latent national sentiment of Canadians, but for the most part he forbore to "direct the storm" which threatened when Lord Alverstone gave his decision against the Dominion. It is true that when

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the question was referred to a tribunal of "impartial jurists" Sir Wilfrid doubted if the Dominion could hope for a favourable result. But as the argument proceeded and the full strength of the case for Canada was revealed he became hopeful and he was encouraged by the confidence of the Canadian arbitrators and the intimation from London that they had Alverstone's support. Whether or not there was ground for this assumed foreknowledge of Alverstone's position may be disputed but the evidence since adduced and fuller knowledge of all the circumstances under which he gave his decision against Canada give reasonable support to the suspicion that he was as partial as the American political jurists and could not escape responsibility for the assumption of his Canadian colleagues that he would give judgment for Canada. It seems now to be clear that President Roosevelt had determined to have an award in favour of the United States, that no evidence could have brought the American members of the tribunal to any other decision, and that British ministers were made aware of the position of the president and the attitude to be taken by the United States if its claims and contentions were rejected. One can understand how much of menace to good relations between the United States and the British Empire there was in such a situation and how deeply distressed Lord Alverstone may have been over the posi-

LORD ALVERSTONE'S DECISION

tion in which he found himself. He may, therefore, have become convinced that higher considerations of long consequence and momentous significance to the English-speaking nations, compelled a decision which his Canadian colleagues believed was in conflict with the evidence and in denial of his own conclusion from the facts and arguments placed before the tribunal. When the decision was rendered there was a sense of desertion and betrayal in Canada, but by wise counsels prejudices were restrained and passions subdued. There was no sustained attempt by the Canadian government to cover a diplomatic defeat by a political agitation. Sir Wilfrid Laurier displayed just such patience and restraint as did Lord Salisbury under the menace of Cleveland's provocative Venezuela message; and who shall say, looking forward to a time of infinite peril for the British Empire, that Lord Alverstone's decision, rooted in indecision, may not have been of advantage to mankind?

It would be impossible to find a public career of continuous and unbroken consistency. Such a career probably would be infertile and ineffective. Hon. Edward Blake, once hailed as the rising hope of Canadian imperialists, became an extreme autonomist. Signers of the annexation manifesto of 1849 became inflexible guardians of the connection between Canada and Great Britain. Joseph Chamberlain, who began his political career as a

Republican, became a staunch champion of the Throne and the high priest of British imperialists. Indeed, it would be hard to find a public man of the first rank in Great Britain whose last electoral address was not a challenge to his first appeal to the people. Possibly in Canada none have been so inconsistent as those who have adhered with tenacious consistency to either of the political parties. Men grow wiser, whether or not they grow more flexible, and when all is said accommodation and compromise are the essential conditions of free government. But only the compromises which the national interest demands can be defended as there is nothing but dishonour in those which sacrifice principles and convictions for sheer personal or party advantage.

There is less of deliberate inconsistency in the public career of Sir Wilfrid Laurier than in that of many of his contemporaries. If as a young man he opposed union of the British North American provinces he became a faithful and powerful servant of the confederation. If at first he saw in the distance an independent Canada he never set himself to any intrigue or movement to separate the Dominion from Great Britain or to create discord between the Canadian provinces. Lincoln subordinated his hatred of slavery to his desire and determination to save the American union. Laurier set aside youthful convictions and prejudices as his vision grew larger and his own power

FREE TRADE IMPOSSIBLE

to direct the destiny of Canada was revealed and established. Thirty or forty years ago when the Liberal party was committed to the advocacy of free trade with the United States he came to realize that persistence in the agitation could only produce despair in Canada and feed the feeling for annexation. If he was reluctant to recede, and not too conscious of the consequences of persistence, at least he did retreat when it became clear that a further advance would disrupt the Liberal party and force a conflict upon the country which might lead to an appeal even beyond the ballot. He saw later that free trade with the United States was an impossible policy for Canada and it is certain that when the trade agreement with the Taft administration was negotiated there was no design to affect the commercial or political independence of the Dominion. Conceivably, as has been said, the policy would have prevailed even against the powerful forces which united to secure its defeat if its implications and possible effects had not been emphasized and perhaps exaggerated by American politicians unduly and unwisely anxious to make capital for the Taft administration.

The truth is that Laurier was not fortunate in trade negotiations either with the United States or with Great Britain. It is commonly argued that he gave a preference to British manufactures in Canada without any immediate expectation of

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reciprocal advantages in British markets. This is true and it is true because he believed, with reason, that the British government would not abrogate the German and Belgian treaties which prevented discrimination by the British Dominions in favour of the mother country and which Conservative governments in Canada had sought again and again to have repealed, if there was even a suggestion that the British free trade system would be affected by the action of the Dominion. In a private letter Hon. Edward Blake once described the Canadian tariff of 1897 as "a political tariff." He meant that the device of preference was adopted because the Laurier government could not safely make such radical reductions in the tariff as would be necessary to fulfil the pledges of Liberal leaders to the constituencies. There was no thought of preference before office was secured. One wonders what was the attitude of Laurier himself when the proposal was first urged upon his consideration. Consummate politician as he was he must at once have seen its advantages as he enjoyed the situation which actual presentation of the proposal created among his opponents in parliament. At one stroke the government which it was alleged would begin its career by "truckling to Washington" made a direct advance to Great Britain and refused equivalent concessions to the United States. The suspicion of "disloyalty" was dispelled and a "prac-

THE BRITISH PREFERENCE

tical loyalty" disclosed as compared with the alleged "professional loyalty" of the Conservative party. Sir Wilfrid once said that no government could be strong in Canada that was not well regarded in Great Britain. By this single action he won high favour in the mother country and had his reward at the Diamond Jubilee.

Who turned Laurier towards the British preference has never been revealed. He had a close working relation with D'Alton McCarthy, for many years among the most ardent and influential Conservatives in parliament, but who had broken with Sir John Macdonald and led a revolt against Sir John Thompson, had created a third party, with more power for mischief than for useful public service, and had become an advocate of lower tariff with preferential treatment of British manufactures. But we have no exact knowledge that McCarthy led Laurier to the gate of preference while we know that Sir Oliver Mowat of Ontario and Sir Louis Davies of Prince Edward Island and probably other members of the cabinet would rejoice in any advance towards Great Britain. Mowat, too, was fearful of the consequences of radical tariff changes and inflexibly against any fiscal approach to Washington. Indeed, when confronted with the actual responsibilities of office the whole cabinet realized the necessity for a substantial modification of the programme which Liberal leaders had kept before

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the country through a long and arid season of Opposition.

But Laurier was not content with a preference that brought no compensatory return. It was found that the lower scale of duties under the preference had a serious effect upon important Canadian industries. Woolen and cotton factories suffered through keener British competition. Other Canadian industries demanded better protection against British imports. During the Boer war when duties for revenue were levied by Great Britain upon wheat and flour an urgent appeal was made by the Canadian government to have these duties retained against foreign countries and removed from imports from the Dominions. It was promised that if this consideration could be extended to Canada the Dominion government would endeavour to enlarge the existing preference in favour of British manufactures. But the British revenue duties were repealed, during the absence of Mr. Chamberlain in South Africa, and the best opportunity which has ever offered to establish mutual preferences throughout the Empire was lost. Probably Mr. Chamberlain could not have prevented repeal since he failed as other British political leaders have failed to secure a judgment from the British people in favour of preference or protection. It does not seem to be remembered, however, that from 1902 to 1907 the Laurier government stood staunchly for prefer-

PREFERENCE IN DANGER

ence and was behind the resolutions of imperial conferences which urged the other Dominions to support the position of Canada. When it was made clear that Great Britain would not respond, certain duties under the Canadian preference were increased to the advantage of Canadian industries and for a time there was some prospect that the whole policy of preference would be abandoned.¹

One feels that if the wheat and flour duties had been retained against foreign countries with exemption for the Dominions the trade agreement

¹ At the imperial conference of 1902, the Canadian ministers submitted a memorandum in which it was said: "From the beginning of the proceedings the Canadian ministers have claimed that in consideration of the substantial preference given by Canada for some years to the products of the mother country, Canadian food products should be exempted in the United Kingdom from the duties recently imposed. Representations to this effect previously made through the High Commissioner for Canada were supplemented by the ministers, both in writing and in personal interviews with the imperial ministers." In reply to the contention of Mr. Chamberlain on behalf of the British government that the value of the concessions granted by Canada was not sufficient to justify an important departure from the established fiscal policy of the United Kingdom, the memorandum said: "If they could be assured that the imperial government would accept the principle of preferential trade generally, and particularly grant to the food products of Canada in the United Kingdom exemption from duties now levied or hereafter imposed, they, the Canadian ministers, would be prepared to go further into the subject, and endeavour to give to the British manufacturer some increased advantage over his foreign competitors in the markets of Canada." The concluding sentence of the memorandum read: "If, after using every effort to bring about such a readjustment of the fiscal policy of the Empire, the Canadian government should find that the principle of preferential trade is not acceptable to the colonies generally, or the mother country, then Canada should be free to take such action as might be deemed necessary in the presence of such conditions."

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with Washington through which the Laurier government was defeated would never have been negotiated and that Laurier would have taken a different attitude in later imperial conferences. He came to believe that there was a deep design among British statesmen to involve Canada in heavier imperial obligations while the British people were resolutely determined to deny the Dominions any advantages over foreign countries in British markets. He did not question the right of the British people to adhere to free trade, but probably if he had disclosed his whole mind he would have contended that if considerations of Empire must be excluded from trade relations, imperial councils and imperial conferences would be concerned chiefly with questions which could only increase his political difficulties in Canada and out of which he could secure no advantages to balance the concessions he would be required to make in the settlement of imperial problems over which there were vital differences of opinion among his own people. It is still true, however, that Dr. Skelton's "Life and Letters," admirable and faithful as it is in general statement and argument, reveals a Laurier too critical of British policy and too fearful of political coöperation with the mother country. One feels that the writer is too anxious to find support for his own opinions in the career and utterances of the Liberal leader and too willing to emphasize differences between

FEAR OF CENTRALIZATION

Laurier and British ministers at imperial conferences over proposals which Laurier could not entertain because he firmly believed that in centralization there was danger to the imperial structure and in freedom for the Dominion from definite contracts and engagements the best assurance of strength and unity. If he was not an imperialist of the old school which aims at centralization and an Empire bound together by contractual obligations, he was for his time content to have the destiny of Canada merged in the destiny of the Empire, and willing in any time of crisis to sanction common action for common defence and security. He held, however, that a Canadian, an Australian or a South African nationalist was the truest imperialist and at least in Canada, whatever may be the revelation of the future, influential leaders of the Conservative party seem to have espoused opinions which from the mouth of Laurier were alleged to have the taint of disloyalty and to be fraught with danger to the imperial connection.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier's opinions were formed in the Whig school of England, and fashioned in the traditions of British constitutionalism. This in itself is striking testimony to his native strength of character and exceptional capacity for independent thinking. He came upon the scene at the birth of confederation, surrounded by eager agitators touched with the revolutionary zeal of con-

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tinental Liberalism and still verging upon the excesses of the old *Rouge* programme. The spirit of his political surroundings was hostile to the confederation settlement, resentful of Cartier's alliance with Brown and Macdonald, eager to accomplish Cartier's downfall even by appeal to the prejudices of his compatriots, and profoundly apprehensive of the effects of confederation upon the social and political fortunes of the French population. In face of all these adverse circumstances he perfected his English speech, read his English books, developed the constitutional temper of British statesmanship, and found in the principle of federalism ample guarantees for all the legitimate rights and interests of the race and the province to which he belonged, and the wider basis of a common nationality and a united British commonwealth.

Moderation was the keynote of his career, and the secret of his achievements. He learned at the threshold of his public life that the statesman must often resist popular clamor, and stand impervious to momentary gusts of popular passion, and that all enduring achievement must be based in the reason rather than in the emotions of the people. He was distrustful always of extreme opinions and of intemperate advocacy. He was doubtful always of the wisdom of violent changes and impatient of mere demagoguery. He would probably have agreed with that incisive judgment of

IN FAVOUR OF THE SENATE

Lord Morris that he never knew a small town in Ireland but had a blackguard in it who called himself "the people." The disposition to preserve was an essential element in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's statesmanship, as indeed it must be the dominant principle of all successful government in free communities. It has been remarked elsewhere that in all his long and stubborn contest with the ultramontanes he permitted no angry or impatient word to pass his lips, scrupulously confined the quarrel to the political arena, maintained a quiet respect for the faith in which he was born, and zealously guarded the fame of the historical church as a religious institution. So, in the field of constitutional reform he strove for amendment within the constitution, and firmly opposed all intemperate agitation for radical alteration of the terms of confederation. For example, he never countenanced the movement for abolition of the Senate. He respected the prohibitions and sought to maintain inviolate the guarantees of the Act of Union. In the adjustment of tariffs he adhered to a conservative programme, and set his face against rash and revolutionary disturbance of established conditions.

The ideals of free trade found ever-increasing sanction in his judgment and experience, but he recognized practical conditions and perceived that in many branches of manufacture the Canadian factory, with its limited market and necessarily

restricted output, could not compete successfully with the great specialized industries of the United States, and that Canada was bound, therefore, to maintain for such industries a measure of protection against American competition so long as Canadian manufactures were excluded from the American market. He understood that it was not easy for a small community to adhere to free trade, in the teeth of powerful protectionist neighbours with a vast equipment of developed industries. Even if Canadians were ready to accept American manufactures, rather than manufacture for themselves, it would still be necessary, so long as the revenue of the country is raised by customs taxation, to have a tariff that will afford a considerable measure of protection to native industries. It is necessary, also, to face the fact that protectionism is a vital part of modern nationalism. More and more the chief commercial nations are organizing themselves as great trading concerns. Great Britain is the exception, but it would be rash now to deny that even Britain may seek to establish preferential trading arrangements with the outlying British dominions, or perhaps limit the freedom of her ports in order to force open the ports of her competitors. But if the change come it will come only because her manufacturing supremacy has been successfully challenged by the developed industries of the protectionist nations. The free trader argues that the

PROTECTION AND NATIONALISM

United States does not furnish a fair example of the effects of protection. The protectionist contends that under modern conditions no other nation could prosper by the British free trade system. The first tells us that the astonishing progress of the United States is due to the absolute free trade which prevails all over its wide extent of territory, and between all its rich and populous communities, rather than to its high tariff against outside nations. The second argues that British industries got their early foothold under protection and secured their command of the world's markets while the industries of other communities were in process of development, and that the industries nourished by protection in other countries are now in a position to drive Britain out of neutral markets and even successfully invade her own markets. Thus the controversy stands. The spirit of nationalism in all other nations buttresses the system of protection, while the newer imperial spirit of the British communities looks to preferential tariff agreements as a means of combination and defence against the trade rivals of the Empire. Canada, in the meantime, has settled down to a policy of discrimination in favour of British products, and of necessary protection against the United States, at least so long as Canadian products and manufactures are shut out of American markets. All these circumstances and tendencies Sir Wilfrid Laurier

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recognized, and shaped his policy in reasonable conformity with the temper of the times, and in intelligent comprehension of the impotence of theories in face of practical conditions.

He understood that all wise and provident government must wait upon public opinion and crystallize into legislation the settled judgment of a majority of the people. He would probably have accepted Lecky's estimate of Walpole as the true interpretation of the function of the legislator. Lecky said that Walpole "belonged to that class of legislators who recognize fully that government is an organic thing, that all transitions, to be safe, should be the gradual product of public opinion, that the great end of statesmanship is to secure the nation's practical well-being, and allow its social and industrial forces to develop unimpeded, and that a wise minister will carefully avoid exciting violent passions, provoking reactions, and generating enduring discontents." It is easy and convenient for a leader in Opposition to nurse radical movements and maintain a sympathetic alliance with the dissident elements of the community. It is necessary to the orderly course of government and the stability of the State, as well as to the political safety of ministers, for governments to sound the depths of public opinion and obtain some reasonable and authoritative sanction for progressive measures. Cavour once said to a novice in public life: "If you want to be a politician,

A DESTRUCTIVE TEMPER

for mercy's sake do not look more than a week ahead." This may suggest the temper of the reactionary, but Cavour, at least, was not a reactionary, and perhaps his achievements rank with those of any man who ever played the great game of statecraft. His cynical sentence, however, keenly suggests the sudden surprises, the changes of wind and weather, the hidden snares and pitfalls which wait upon governments, and as keenly emphasizes the eternal wariness necessary to the successful management of an enfranchised democracy.

For the first three decades of confederation the leaders of the Liberal party were but five years in office. It was natural, therefore, that the party should develop the destructive rather than the constructive spirit, and should chafe under the discipline necessary to the stability and solidarity of a governing organization. The spirit born of long years of opposition hampered Mackenzie and made the work of government exceedingly difficult for the first Laurier administration. It was long before the masses of the Liberal party recognized the changed conditions and the very different responsibilities which surround and beset men in office, and settled down to an appreciation of the manifold tasks and difficulties of government in Canada. It is true that in some of the provinces the Liberal party had had long periods of ascendancy. But the administration of the affairs of a

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Canadian province is vastly easier than the government of the complex racial and sectional elements which compose the Dominion, and federal rather than provincial issues mark the division between political parties in Canada. It is no secret that Sir John Macdonald preferred to have the provincial government in the hands of his political opponents, and often shrank from identification with the destructive policies of provincial Oppositions. The temper of defence rather than the temper of attack is essential to the comfort and safety of governments. A party long inured to Opposition is slow to learn consideration for ministers confronted with the actual tasks of administration, and slow to appreciate the danger and unwisdom of raw and premature legislation. Hence, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, like Alexander Mackenzie, found his first years of office greatly vexed by the impatient demands of isolated groups and diverse elements, and by the indisposition to concede that all sections of the country, and all substantial interests must receive recognition and consideration from a national administration.

It seemed to be Sir Wilfrid Laurier's habit to reveal himself at Quebec. There were spoken, perhaps, the two greatest speeches he ever delivered outside of parliament. There is something personal and intimate in his address of 1877 on political Liberalism, and these qualities also peculiarly distinguish a speech of remarkable beauty,

A PLEA FOR UNION

eloquence and power which he delivered at Quebec in 1894. The later speech completes the earlier utterance, and the two constitute a creed of Liberalism and an expression of patriotism as noble and courageous as ever have been pronounced by a Canadian statesman. The speech of 1894, like that of 1877, is a plea for moderation, for union, for civil and religious freedom, for a good understanding between the French and English races, for the subordination of all sectional aims and ambitions to the great end of unity and consolidation.

In 1877, he protested against the design to organize into a political party the Catholic element of the population; so in 1894 he protested against the design to establish a separate French nationality in Quebec. "I am of French origin," he said, "a descendent of that great nation, which, as remarked by a thinker, has provoked enthusiasm, admiration, hatred, envy or pity, but never indifference, because it has ever been great, even in its faults. I acknowledge that I am of French origin, but if I recognize the fact, I also recognize the position in which my race have been placed by the battle which was fought on the Plains of Abraham, and which is commemorated by a monument reared by you to the memory of the two commanders who there lost their lives. There are some amongst us who forget this state of things, who affect to believe that a small

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French republic or monarchy—I hardly know what they want—should be established on the banks of the St. Lawrence. I cannot accept this idea, because those who use this language speak like slaves who would break their bonds if they dared, but who do not do so because they are cowards. For my part I believe myself to be a free man, and this is why I am in favour of the actual régime.”

He was happy, he said, to proclaim in the old French city of Quebec that the basis and aim of the ideas and hopes of Liberals was to create a Canadian nationality. Their great object was the development of the work of confederation, to draw closer, to bind and cement together, the different elements scattered over the face of British North America and to weld them into one nation. This was the rôle of the Liberal party in the confederation, and so long as he had a part in the shaping of its destinies this was the ideal towards which it should gravitate. He did not forget that the Liberals of Lower Canada feared confederation. He did not forget that Dorion and the French-Canadian Liberals were afraid that confederation would prove the grave of the things which they should always regard as a sacred inheritance. But although he was a disciple of Dorion and a pupil of the Dorion school, he was bound to confess that on this point his ideas were those of Cartier rather than those of Dorion.

UNITED BY LIBERTY

There was no conflict between their interests and their duty. They belonged to different races, not to war upon each other, but to labour together for the common good. It had to be said in justice to the memory of Dorion, that no sooner had the majority of the country pronounced in favour of the union than he and his friends rallied unreservedly to the support of the new order of things with the intention of each contributing in the measure of his strength to the success of confederation. LaFontaine feared that under the union of 1841 the British majority would abuse their power to persecute the French race. Dorion feared that under confederation the French minority would lose their influence and perhaps be subjected to humiliation. In the one case, as in the other, events had proved that these apprehensions had no justification.

There was room enough in this great country for all the races, all the creeds, and all the religions. If they were separated by language and religion they were united by liberty. "Is there," he said, "a man amongst us who forgets that when Papineau was struggling for the rights of his race and for the constitutional liberty which we to-day enjoy, his principal coadjutors were John Nelson, the Scotchman, and O'Callaghan, the Irishman? Is there a man who can forget that, when the constitutional voice was useless, when our representations and our remonstrances

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remained for years and years unanswered, and when the peasants of St. Denis took up arms and faced the veterans of Waterloo, their commander was not a Canadian, but an Englishman named Wolfred Nelson? And, three days afterwards, when these same peasants were swept with the leaden hail at St. Charles, can it be forgotten that the man who again led them was an Englishman named Thomas S. Brown? How can these men or their descendants—English, Scotch, Irish, and French—who shed their blood to win for us the liberties we enjoy to-day, make use of the same liberties to tear each other to pieces? Far be from me the thought; let us be more broadminded, and say that those who shared in the labour shall also share in the reward.”

He deplored the fact that racial and religious sentiments were exploited in Canada. He declared that for many years the Conservative party had been an eminently religious party in politics. He believed in all modesty that in the ordinary things of life Conservatives were not any better than other people. Like Liberals they were subject to all the frailties inherent in poor humanity. “But in politics we cannot hold a candle to them on the score of religion. The moment politics are in question they become terribly religious. Discuss any question with them of protection, free trade, finance or railways, and immediately their great argument amounts to this: ‘Ah! we are religious,

A BRITISH LIBERAL

we are; but those other fellows opposite have not much religion.' I do not boast about my religion. It sometimes happens to me, however, to go to church, and, when I do go there, the only thing I can do on entering is to say to the Lord: 'Pardon me, a poor sinner.' And when I raise my eyes I see close to the altar rails, almost on the very steps of the altar itself, Mr. So-and-So and his friends, whom you know very well, and who are saying: 'I thank you, oh God, that I am not like unto that publican there.' "

He proceeded: "I have always proclaimed, and again I repeat, that in politics we belong to the British Liberal school, to the School of Fox and Gladstone. In religion I belong to the school of Montalembert and Lacordaire, of the men who were the greatest, perhaps, of their age in loftiness of character and nobility of thought. I know of no grander spectacle than the spectacle of Montalembert and Lacordaire, two adolescents, two children almost, undertaking to conquer in France freedom of education, and succeeding in their object after many years of struggle. I know of no finer spectacle than that furnished by Montalembert confronting the French *bourgeoisie*, impregnated as they were with that dissolving materialism, the Voltairian skepticism of the eighteenth century, and exclaiming: 'We are the sons of the Crusaders and shall not retreat before the sons of Voltaire.' I know of no grander or more beautiful

spectacle than that of Lacordaire proclaiming from the pulpit of Notre Dame the truths of Christianity to the incredulous crowd and teaching them that life is a sacrifice and is only rendered worthy by duty accomplished. These are our models and, whether we be assailed or approved, we shall endeavour to imitate these models without fear and without reproach to the end. Unfortunately, these men who rendered so much service to Christianity and struggled so much in its holy cause were attacked and denounced as bad Catholics and as heretics by the men who, fortunately, did not constitute a school, for if they had they would have rendered Catholicism impossible. We have such men in our midst to-day; we have intolerant and extravagant Catholics who understand neither the times, the country, nor the surroundings in which they live. I mention these things which you may think do not apply here but which, on the contrary, have an immense application, for this reason; because if we have amongst us men who try to prostitute the Catholic religion to the ends of politics there are also men in the province of Ontario who are endeavouring to play the same game with the Protestant religion. There has just been formed in that province an organization called the Protestant Protective Association whose object is to exclude all Catholics from the civil government on the pretence that they cannot be loyal citizens to

CATHOLICS AND THE STATE

the State and that they are compelled by their faith, even in temporal matters, to obey the authority of the pope. Gentlemen, standing here in the province of Quebec and in the city of Quebec, you know as well as I do that these theories are positively false. Nevertheless, they are constantly repeated in Ontario."

He quoted the celebrated letter of Cardinal Newman, addressed to the Duke of Norfolk, in reply to Mr. Gladstone demonstrating that the theories of a certain school were not the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and pointing out that while the pope possessed supreme jurisdiction in spiritual matters he claimed none in temporal things. He gave Cardinal Newman's words: "Were I actually a soldier or sailor in Her Majesty's service, and sent to take part in a war which I could not in my conscience see to be unjust, and should the pope suddenly bid all Catholic soldiers and sailors to return from the service, here, again, taking the advice of others, as best I could, I should not obey him." He recalled the fact that when Newman's pamphlet was written he was simply Dr. Newman, and pointed out that he was afterward raised to the purple, and contended, therefore, that his words, which were the words of the Church, constituted a complete reply to the Protestant Protective Association. His peroration was as brilliant as any that he had ever spoken:

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“You are aware that in the eleventh century certain men started out from Normandy, Anjou, Brittany and Angoulême to capture England. Duke William of Normandy was their leader, and our present sovereign is the last scion of a royal race that dates back to William the Conqueror. In the sixteenth century men started from the same provinces of Normandy, Anjou, Brittany and Angoulême to colonize the fertile lands on the banks of the St. Lawrence. In the next century the men of both races met face to face here, and you know what happened. Well, is it not permissible to hope that a day will come when, instead of facing each other on hostile purpose intent, the men of the two countries, the descendants of the Bretons, Angevins and Normans who invaded England in the eleventh century and the descendants of the Angevins, Normans and Bretons who peopled Canada in the sixteenth, will meet together, not to fight, but to hold the grand assizes of peace and commerce? I may not live long enough to see that day but if my career should be sufficiently extended to allow me to take part in these assizes it will be a happy day to me. I shall attend them bearing with me my Canadian nationality, and I believe that I shall continue the work of Mr. LaFontaine and Sir Georges Étienne Cartier and that the result will be all to the advantage of French Canada. Gentlemen, our situation as a country is full of difficulties, and

PEACE, CONCORD, UNION

those difficulties are no doubt immense. Still, there is nothing desperate about them. What this country needs above all is peace, concord and union between all the elements composing its population. Let us show to the world that if we reverence the past we also have a regard for the future. Let us show to the world that union does not mean absorption, and that autonomy does not mean antagonism. Victor Hugo, recalling his double origin, used these fine words:

‘Fidèle au double sang qu’ont versé dans
ma veine,
Mon père, vieux soldat, ma mère, Vendé-
enne.’¹

Let us also be true to our double origin, true to the memory and the reverence of the great nation from which we have sprung and true also to the great nation which has given us freedom. And, in all the difficulties, all the pains, and all the vicissitudes of our situation, let us always remember that love is better than hatred and faith better than doubt, and let hope in our future destinies be the pillar of fire to guide us in our career.”²

Sir Wilfrid Laurier delivered few greater speeches in the House of Commons than those he pronounced upon the death of Queen Victoria

¹ “True to the double blood that was poured into my veins by my father, an old soldier, and my mother, a Vendean.”

² Speech at Quebec, January 4th, 1894.

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and upon the death of Gladstone. It was his privilege to meet both the great Queen and her great subject when he was in England, and for each he entertained respect and admiration hardly short of veneration. These speeches are remarkable for loftiness of thought, felicity of expression, and great and intimate knowledge of world-wide movements and events. In all of his speeches which do not touch strictly controversial issues there is the even poise and the deep-searching spirit of the historian, and a serenity and sanity which reveal qualities that rarely find expression in the narrow field of partisan controversy. It is understood that Sir Wilfrid Laurier at one time designed to write a history of Canada from the union of 1841 to confederation, but was deterred by political duties and particularly by his acceptance of the leadership of the Liberal party. Doubtless by his devotion to politics he rendered vastly greater service to Canada than any service that he could have performed in the field of literature. In that field, however, he could have done useful and solid work, and if the country gained much it also lost something by his absorption in public affairs. He cherished a strong desire to do something for Canadian art and literature, and sought zealously for a plan whereby this desire might be actively and practically furthered. Many of his speeches reveal the true historical insight and a profound conception of the underlying

LAURIER'S HUMOUR

motives and currents of the conspicuous events of the age in which he lived.

The element of humour was not predominant in many of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speeches. He had, however, a keen wit and dearly loved a jest or a story. He delighted in the lighter speeches of Nicholas Flood Davin, the scholarly Irishman who for many years represented a western constituency in the Commons, and found the fresh and happy humour of Dr. Landerkin, most beloved of Liberal members from Ontario, a source of perennial enjoyment. It is remembered that on one occasion when he was campaigning in western Ontario he was invited to spend half an hour at a concert where the chief entertainment was provided by the Fax brothers. These popular comic vocalists, however, proved a greater attraction than his other engagements, and he could not be persuaded to withdraw until the close of the concert. No one in all the village audience more heartily enjoyed the entertainment than the leader of the Liberal party. He was, in truth, fond of all clean humour, of gay badinage, of jovial company, of all kindly and sympathetic human companionship. Under such circumstances there was a lightness, a gaiety, a spontaneous and infectious wit in his conversation which his speeches seldom reveal. He could, however, counter readily upon an interrupter, he had an incisive and delicate satire, and if the occasion demanded he could be severely

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caustic. Parliament was greatly entertained when he clothed with judicial functions, elevated to the bench, and pronounced a grave and solemn judgment for each of the Conservative ministers who heard argument of counsel and judicially affirmed the necessity for the Manitoba Remedial Order. He once compared Sir Charles Tupper to the old blind king of Bohemia on the battlefield of Crecy, valiant but blind, striking to right and left and injuring no one but himself. Bantering the Conservative leader on his reminiscent exaltation of his own political services, he said that between Sir John Macdonald and himself they had sailed the ship of state pretty successfully; Sir John was at the helm and supplied the brains while Sir Charles supplied the wind; his blowing swelled the sails. Roughly interrupted at a public meeting by an Anglican clergyman who hinted at his Catholic faith and said he could teach him the true way, Laurier retorted: "Perhaps, but not in politics." In one of his speeches on the north-west rebellion he said that if he had belonged to the half-breed community on the banks of the Saskatchewan he would have shouldered his musket in defence of the rights which the government persistently denied and in protest against the grievances it would not redress. This was tortured into a threat that he would "shoot down the Canadian volunteers," and the utterance was industriously exploited by the Conservative news-

SWEAR BUT NOT BET

papers and politicians. He was addressing an English meeting in one of the eastern townships of Quebec during the electoral campaign of 1887 when a man rose in the audience and asserted that a few nights before he had heard Mr. Laurier tell a French meeting that if he had been on the banks of the Saskatchewan he would have shot down the volunteers. A second man jumped to his feet, declared that he had attended the same meeting, and he would bet five dollars that Mr. Laurier had not made any such statement. The accuser retorted that he would make an affidavit that Laurier had so spoken to his French audience. Laurier said from the platform: "Yes, you will swear, but you will not bet." During the term of the Mackenzie government, Mr. Mousseau, a man of gigantic bulk, charged the ministers with fattening on the sweat of the people. Mr. Laurier, then tall, slim and delicate, pointed to his massive opponent and said: "If anyone here is fattening on the sweat of the people, which is it, he or I?" A lady belonging to western Ontario, of rare conversational gifts, quickwitted, apt in repartee and of exceptional political sagacity, who spent many sessions at Ottawa with her husband, said to Laurier on the eve of the general election of 1896: "It has been a long chase." "Yes," he replied, "a very long one, but it is near the end." "Then," said she, "I hope I may be in at the death." At once, with the grace and readiness of

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a courtier, he answered: "We will give you the brush."

Nature was prodigal of her gifts to Wilfrid Laurier. He had distinction of manner, a gracious dignity of bearing, a rich, sonorous voice, flexible, vibrant and variant as the tones of a perfect instrument; a face luminous, mobile and responsive to all the human emotions; ample stature, erect, commanding and finely proportioned; a head like a sculptor's model, once crowned with a wealth of luxuriant wavy locks; ease and freedom of movement which suggested perfect physical development. He dressed with scrupulous care as though jealous of all the advantages he had received from mother nature, and conscious that physical as well as mental gifts could be set to service.

There was something in the man which forbade undue familiarity and yet nothing which prevented approach from the poorest and humblest. It was not the mere art of the politician which invited to his side, when he was out in the country districts, the gray-haired, toil-worn worker in field or shop, but an innate goodness of heart, an unaffected love of his kind, and a profound appreciation of the worldly wisdom, hard common sense and sound political temper of those we call the plain people. In the districts of Arthabaska, Drummond and Megantic these people were his firm and intimate friends, and they would have

A GENEROUS CRITIC

smiled at the thought that there was nothing behind the relationship other than the mere concern of a politician to retain political support. His friendships were enduring and not exacting, so long as he was persuaded of the good faith of those with whom he coöperated. He was neither boastful of his own achievements, nor contemptuous of the services which other men performed, nor jealous of the praise which other men received. He was singularly free from prejudice in appraising the gifts and qualities of his political opponents. He rarely passed a harsh criticism upon Sir John Macdonald. He always recognized the great difficulties which confronted the Conservative leader in the earlier period of confederation and the extraordinary skill and resource displayed in his treatment of hard and vexing problems, and especially his supreme capacity for political leadership. He greatly esteemed Sir John Abbott, and had a strong admiration for the high legal attainments and clear and powerful intellect of Sir John Thompson. He overlooked Sir Mackenzie Bowell's extreme partisanship in respect for his personal honesty and soundness of heart, and he had unstinted admiration for the marvellous physical vigour and invincible courage of Sir Charles Tupper. The soul of loyalty himself, he looked for loyalty in his associates; and there was something like humility in his simple gratitude for the undeviating support he

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received from Sir Richard Cartwright. He loved to wander with Sir Thomas White out from the narrow lanes of partisan controversy into wide fields of philosophic speculation. He served under Mackenzie and under Blake with zeal and good faith, unbroken by any fitful detachment or querulous repining over persistent ill-fortune, and if his will could have prevailed, Sir Richard Cartwright would have succeeded to the Liberal leadership.

He had a thoroughly philosophic temperament and when he had done his best accepted with resignation the judgment of the people. He was as calm and as self-contained in the heat of a political contest as at his own fireside in the placid discussion of literary, philosophic and general topics in which he took delight. Amid all the clamor of the general election of 1891, the first contest in which he appeared as leader of the Liberal party, the *Montreal Witness* said: "Mr. Laurier spent a quiet day and, though much wearied by his previous exertions, was bright and pleasant to everyone. What a relief to talk with a man so different from the hand-shaking, story-telling, cajoling politician! Mr. Laurier's charm of conversation and purity of character win him friends even from political opponents of the fiercest stripe. He is fighting his political battle like a man every inch, and making headway wherever electors take men first—politics afterwards." The *Montreal* correspondent of the *Toronto Mail* used similar lan-

A TRUE ORATOR

guage. He wrote: "It is a remarkable fact that amidst all the excitement of the campaign Mr. Laurier, the Liberal leader pursues the even tenor of his way. Not since the opening of the campaign has he uttered a harsh word against his opponents. He has dealt with the issue on its merits and to all the cries that have been raised he has made a dignified reply. Even his bitterest opponents admit that he is fighting the campaign like a man and that his conduct is in remarkable contrast to that of some of the leading public men who are now parading the country."

It was perhaps as an orator that Laurier was chiefly distinguished. His speeches have much of the beauty and simplicity of Lincoln's addresses and State papers, with more of imaginative quality and oratorical intensity. He was more diffusive than Bright, but far less so than Gladstone. He lacked Gladstone's energy and was doubtless less ready to invite combat, less eager in his impulses, less restless in his environment. But once he had made his decision he was bold, resolute, wary and sagacious in the pursuit of his end. He had patience under attack and contempt for the mere tattle of partisan controversy. He seldom corrected the smaller misrepresentations of his objects and motives, and much that was said by a hostile press he wholly set aside as of no practical account in the serious discussion of public questions. Few men were more apt in quotation

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or more skilful in citing historical and constitutional precedents calculated to touch the feeling and excite the sympathies of the audience he addressed. This came of his deep reading and profound knowledge of Canadian and British history. There is more of the history of Canada in Sir Wilfrid Laurier's speeches than in those of any other public man of his generation, and his remarkable historical equipment lent steadiness and sobriety to his career and saved him from rash identification with ephemeral agitations and hasty acceptance of social and economic theories which had cheated and betrayed in other times and other countries. He had neither the fervour of the revolutionary nor the zeal of the radical. His whole career was that of a moderate Liberal, in the main conservative in its tendencies and individualistic in its spirit.

His English was that of the essayists and constitutionalists rather than that of the traders and economists. His English was in fact not at all so clear and definite when he discussed questions of trade and finance as when he handled constitutional systems and the principles of government. In French he was as clear and luminous upon the one set of questions as upon the other. His administration was distinguished for progressive social legislation, for sympathetic recognition of the changing relations between labour and capital, and for intelligent comprehension of the new

PREPARING HIS SPEECHES

responsibilities imposed upon governments by the capitalistic organization of modern industry. His, however, was essentially the English of the orator, and that is not the English of the economists. Hence his presentation of commercial and financial questions was not always equal to his understanding of these subjects. In the same sense Goldwin Smith wrote the English of the essayists, and so stated the principles of the economists more successfully than he employed their language in handling the recognized nomenclature of trade and finance. It must always be remembered that in parliament and upon the platform outside of Quebec Sir Wilfrid Laurier found it necessary to speak an acquired language and, notwithstanding his mastery of English speech, still laboured under some disadvantages from which those who speak English as their mother tongue are exempt.

It was never the habit of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to write his speeches. Indeed, he was known to say that he never read his speeches after they were delivered. Still, his greater speeches were the product of much labour and long mental concentration. He thought out every detail of his argument, collected and marshalled his evidence with skill and patience, covered the ground again and again in his mental processes, and thoroughly settled the spirit and method, if not the exact language, of his argument. He was thus

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

released from dependence upon manuscript and what he lost in diffusiveness he gained in freedom of gesture and expression, in dramatic pose, in spontaneity, in truer identity with the mood of his audience, and in clearer perception of the immediate effects of his reasoning. It was to this freshness and freedom that he owed, in some measure, his extraordinary mastery of popular audiences, so readily overcame untoward incidents, and turned to advantage hostile interruptions and unexpected developments. He preferred to address the House of Commons where sober reason and deliberate argument rather than appeal to sentiments and emotions are the essentials of successful speaking. He was, however, equally effective on the platform where his simple sincerity and picturesque personality so tremendously reinforced his nervous eloquence and logical presentation of facts and conclusions. His was essentially a stable mind and a serene temperament. He trusted in the future and revered the past. He was always slow to lay destructive hands upon hallowed institutions and reluctant to disturb the ancient landmarks. He laboured to unify and consolidate the various elements of the confederation, to promote material development, and establish national self-confidence. His heart, his creed and his hope he put into his message to the Acadians of Nova Scotia. "Thank Providence," he said, "that we live in a country of absolute

HIS HOPE FOR CANADA

freedom and liberty. Let us always bear in mind our duties, for duty is always inherent in right. Our fathers had to labour to secure these rights. Now let us fulfil our part. Three years ago, when visiting England at the Queen's Jubilee, I had the privilege of visiting one of those marvels of gothic architecture which the hand of genius, guided by an unerring faith, had made a harmonious whole, in which granite, marble, oak and other materials were blended. This cathedral is the image of the nation that I hope to see Canada become. As long as I live, as long as I have the power to labour in the service of my country, I shall repel the idea of changing the nature of its different elements. I want the marble to remain the marble; I want the granite to remain the granite; I want the oak to remain the oak; I want the sturdy Scotsman to remain the Scotsman; I want the brainy Englishman to remain the Englishman; I want the warm-hearted Irishman to remain the Irishman; I want to take all these elements and build a nation that will be foremost amongst the great powers of the world."¹

¹ Speech at Arichat, N.S., August 15th, 1900.

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